SPORTS / A23
Rose, Immelman share Masters lead; Tiger falters

ACROSS / A14
DOJ asked to issue HDO vs Amanpulo GM for alleged involvement in murder

WORLD / A19
Obama loses 10-pt. advantage over McCain

BUSINESS / B1
Gov't to lower growth target for '08 due to rising food prices

"I WAS forced to carve out and fight ... it's getting out of control."

DJ Montano strikes back at Aussie blogger
By Juliet Labog-Javellana
(First of two parts)

"THE AIM OF THIS BLOG IS BLACKMAIL. This is extortion."

More than a month since "the talented Mr. Montano" became the subject of the

ON PAGE A6

Roll over Beethoven, you can't fly on Tiger

CANBERRA, Australia—Ludwig Van Beethoven would not be allowed to fly alone on a Tiger Air flight if he were alive today because of the Singapore-

FULL STORY, A2

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Saturday, April 12, 2008 ++ Vol. 23 / No. 134 www.inquirer.net

Magdalo men seek pardon

DILG chief Puno set to ask GMA executive clemency for 9 officers

"MERCY AND GRACE" Capt. Gerardo Gambala (center) leads 8 other fellow officers to meet the press on Friday at Army headquarters in Fort Bonifacio where they read a statement apologizing for their role in the so-called Oakwood mutiny in 2003. The 9 military officers received lengthy jail terms three days ago.

By Nikko Dizon

EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY FOR THE NINE JUNIOR ARMY OFFICERS recently convicted of coup d'etat appears to be a cinch, with their spokesperson saying that they were preparing to seek President Macapagal-Arroyo's pardon for their role in the 2003 "Oakwood mutiny."

Asked yesterday at a press briefing what he would tell the President should he be given the chance to meet with her, Capt. Gerardo Gambala said: "I will ask for her mercy and grace. I will apologize to her directly. Although ako ng case at pero-amnesty or kapatawaran (I will seek compassion and understanding from her)."

Gambala also said he would "ask for pardon every day, every week, every month, every year, until I will be given my freedom."

"That is what I am asking for. That is my desire. I will be a hypocrite if I will not tell you that," he said.

In Camp Crame, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, Ms Arroyo's political adviser, said he was ready to endorse a pardon for Gambala and his colleagues—Capt. Milo Maestrecampo, Alvin Ilboro, Albert Baldivy and John Andres, and Lieutenants Lawrence Luis Somera, Clew Dungga-an, Florentino Somera Jr., and Kristopher Bryan Tinsay.

Puno said the nine officers—all members of the "Magdalo" group that took over the then Oakwood Premier serviced apartments in Makati City to denounce alleged corruption in the military and the government and demand the resignation of Ms Arroyo and top military officials—had suffered enough and could now resume being constructive members of society.

"If there is an expression of contrition on the part of the Magdalo soldiers, personally I am in

MAGDALO, A6

Palace drops 'generics only' in cheap medicine bill

By Christine O. Avendaño

SAYING THE COUNTRY CAN-not make the poor and the sick wait much longer, President Macapagal-Arroyo said the Executive Branch would not push for the inclusion of a "generics only" provision in the cheaper or affordable medicines bill to ensure its swift passage.

"We don't want a controversy that will never be played," the President said yesterday on the inauguration the 11,000th Bottle ng Barangay at the Philippine National Police

GMA DROPS, A6

EAT ALL YOU CAN No one has the heart to tell these chubby cuties to moderate their intake of rice and noodles.

GMA goes for 'long-delayed' checkup at St. Luke's; move surprises media

By Christine O. Avendaño and Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO YESTERday went for a "long-delayed" medical checkup at the St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City, according to her spokesperson Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

The last time Ms Arroyo went to the same hospital for a checkup was in December last year when she had pharyngitis.

Marilen Lagmion, St. Luke's vice president for customer affairs, confirmed the President's visit to the hospital, which caught the media by surprise.

It happened midday Friday, yet another schedule-packed day for Ms Arroyo.

"It was just a regular checkup, not an emergency," Lagmion told the Inquirer yesterday

GMA GOES, A4

WRONG FOCUS President Arroyo does not conceal her irritation as she reminds NBI Director Nestor Mantaring to focus on rice hoarding and profiteering, not rice smuggling. Part of the Anti-Rice Hoarding Task Force, the NBI is also told by Ms Arroyo of the country's lack of investigation manpower as focus, "do not be distracted."

Crane cuts power supply in Metro

By Abigail L. Ho

AS IF A SCORCHING SUMMER heat and rising food prices were not enough, residents of parts of Metro Manila and Bulacan yesterday had to contend with another woe: A tower crane on a construction site hit a power line and knocked out electricity from their homes.

The tripping of a National Transmission Corp. (Transco)

CRANE, A4

NBI told to focus on rice hoarders, not smugglers

THE MORE THE BETTER Customs officers inspect containers of smuggled rice from Thailand worth P12.6-million at the Manila port on Friday even as President Arroyo says that rice smuggling is of no concern now as "the more rice we have in the country the better." (Story on Page A4.)

By Allison W. Lopez

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo wants the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and the National Food Authority (NFA) to focus on rice hoarding and profiteering, not smuggling.

The President yesterday issued a strong reminder to the two agencies to go after suspected hoarders and resellers of NFA rice to create a crisis.

"The whole point is hoarding ..." Ms Arroyo said in a briefing at the NBI headquarters in Manila. "Let's not both go the wrong tree. We don't even have enough resources to go after the hoarders.

"That's why we liberalized the importation of rice—so that rice smuggling is not going to be your concern anymore now. We would have captured all the rice in the world; we would have it.

"The more rice we have in the country from abroad, the better. We do not have enough investigation manpower to run after everything. Rice is very expensive abroad; it's more expensive than the rice here ...

"Put all your efforts on hoarding and profiteering. Do not be distracted."

The NBI, which was assigned by Malacañang to be

NBI TOLD, A6

How to balance farmer and consumer interests

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez
Contributor

THE FACT IS THAT THERE IS no rice supply shortage today. We have a 54-day buffer stock, ongoing harvests, and growing importations.

However, there is a shortage in our own rice production. That is why the government is planning to import 2.2 million metric tons of rice this year, almost four times the 0.8 million tons we imported in 2000.

If the imports do not come, there we will have a full-blown rice shortage and crisis.

In fairness, the government did not give the Department of Agriculture (DA) an adequate budget during the past decade. Instead of providing the minimum P32.7 billion annual budget required by the Agriculture Fisheries Modernization Act since 1998, the DA

COMMENTARY

HOW TO, A8

GLOBAL PROBLEM

'Rice price crisis, not food crisis'

By Amy R. Remo

LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA—THE Philippines is calling on the international community to start focusing on solutions to what is being described as a "two price crisis" in countries worldwide.

At a press briefing yesterday, Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap quoted M. Swaminathan, chair of ISOC Bangladesh Ltd., Bangladesh Rice Foundation, as saying that "global rice prices will not abate within the next 10 to 24 months."

Yap pointed out that "we're grappling [with] the same situation." He said it was the "consensus consensus" of International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) board members that "we're looking at firm prices within the next 10 to 24 months."

But he declined to say whether prices would firm up to current levels or would further increase within the period. He said it would be speculative on his part to give "price forecasts."

"We don't have a food crisis but, rather, a rice price crisis," Yap said. "All of us are looking for innovative solutions in our countries—how to address not only the issue of supply but also the issue of prices, how to [ensure] that poor families can eat."

Yap quoted IRRI director general Robert Zeigler as saying that "in no way should farmers be blamed for the current rice situation."

RICE PRICE, A4

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Second FRONTPAGE

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WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY: Tuesday's rain warnings partly made to a more sunny start with isolated showers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

Metro Manila (Table Details) ... Entertainment (Table Details)
Nation (Table Details) ... Sports (Table Details)
Opinion (Table Details) ... Business (Table Details)
Letters (Table Details) ... Technology (Table Details)
Global News (Table Details) ... Real Estate (Table Details)
Regions 1 (Table Details) ... Classifieds (Table Details)
Regions 2 (Table Details) ... Obituaries (Table Details)
Legazpi (Table Details) ... Inquirer on the Go (Table Details)
Cebu (Table Details) ... Weather (Table Details)
Calendar (Table Details) ... Lotto (Table Details)

No flour shortage, just high prices

'We have enough wheat, but...'

By Nonoy Espinosa

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY yesterday assured bread makers and consumers there was enough wheat and flour in the domestic market for the year after baker groups announced price increases due to rising flour cost yesterday.

Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila said he had met with officials of the Philippine Association of Flour Millers, who reported that the group had an aggregate inventory of around 900 million metric tons of wheat and a million metric tons of flour, which translated to some 30 million MT of flour.

Favila quoted Fabrel executive director Ric Pleyo as saying the inventory was even bigger than the eight million MT the group kept last year.

Bountiful harvest

Fabrel also expected a steady supply of wheat until May 2009 because the group had booked flour much shipments from the United States.

It also reported that the global industry expected a bountiful harvest of wheat this year, which was expected to temper prices of the raw material for bread.

"We have enough wheat but the thing is, raw materials are very expensive," said Pleyo.

He said that China was still the dumpster source of wheat even though supplies were available from the US, Australia and Canada.

Favila said that while Fabrel predicted a reduction in the price of wheat by September, the group said bakers and consumers had to contend with price increases until the time.

On Thursday, four umbrella groups of bread makers announced a 50-centavo increase in the price of pan de sal (soft buns, Filipinos' morning bread fare) to P2.50 apiece for the smaller ones, effective April 10.

At the same time, prices of "sassy" (sliced loaf) are expected to go up by P1 to P5.

Less harvest

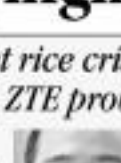
According to the Philippine Baking Industry Group, in Philbaking, the price of a 25-kilogram bag of flour has gone up to P600, from P500 in June 2007.

Also, the international price of wheat has gone up to $24.35 per bushel (in May deliveries), from $10.80 in December, which was attributed to a less harvest and an upsurge in demand.

"We are hoping that the bumper harvest in 2008 will settle in the softening of the wheat prices and that flour millers will make the necessary adjustments," Favila said. With reports from Maureen Magallanes, Inquirer Visayas and AFP

Don't let rice crisis distract us from ZTE probe—Lozada

By Marguie C. Ortiz and Jerome Aning



LOZADA

SEN. ZTE SCANDAL WHISTLEblower Rodolfo Noel "Jun" Lozada yesterday cautioned the public against being distracted by the present rice crisis and not to lose their focus on the national broadband network deal controversy.

"The pieces that complete the NBN-ZTE picture have not surfaced yet," Lozada said in a Forum at the Bonifacio Church in Manila.

"It would be really dangerous for the Filipino people to distract themselves from the real issue of corruption," Lozada stressed.

The NBN-ZTE key witness said he has always been a rice importer, and this past year's experience showed that the Philippines has no problems in rice supply.

"It is coincidental that this rice crisis took place amid the sweep-down scandal," Lozada said.

Lozada, however, said that despite the distraction, he and others will be hard every day for what he will continue his fight for the truth.

Lozada yesterday took the witness stand at the Court of Appeals, which is conducting hearings on the writ of amparo or temporary protection filed by his brother, Arturo.

Lozada told the CA justices that while threats to his safety continued, he would decline any offer of protection from the Philippine National Police or the National Bureau of Investigation but might accept protection from the Senate or other military units.

Asked where the threats against him were coming, he replied that they came from the group of former Elections chief Benjamin Abalos Sr., the group of businessman Romulo Neri and the group of retired general Quirino dela Torre.

He said it was his knowledge about some of the acts of the rest of the threats in his life. He said the threats, mostly sent through text messaging, multiplied after his testimony before the Senate.

In an ambush interview after the hearing, Lozada expressed worry that his family's security would be pulled out once the upper chamber conducts its hearings on the NBN-ZTE scandal.

"Sound, frightening and difficult," he replied when asked how he would feel if the security detail was pulled out without a replacement.

"If the people see that this would be the outcome, maybe nobody would have courage to come out and expose the mafia and wrong doing in government. Kawalan pala kayo ng lang siguro ng loob at diskarte ibig sabihin nito would all be left to courage and prayers[,]" he told reporters.

Lozada said one reason for his refusal for police protection was PNP chief Razon's earlier declaration that he (Lozada) had requested for security when no such request was made.

Upon direct examination by his counsel, Lozada narrated how he was accosted by four or five unidentified men upon his arrival from Hong Kong at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport on July 5.

"Sinuntok ako ng isa, sabi ko 'huwag' and 'nanginginig' when two of the men grabbed him on the arm until one taking his bag and another snatching his passport from his coat's breast pocket.

"Kami lang habols (We'll take care of it)," was the men's only answers when he inquired where he was being taken.

Give up 2010 plans, bishop tells Erap

CONVICTED PLUNDERER EX-President Joseph Estrada has been advised by yet another Catholic prelate to abandon his plans to run for President in 2010.

"Enough is enough," said Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines in a statement posted on the CBCP website.

Lagdameo said Estrada should give a chance for others to seek the presidency.

He also said Estrada, who was ousted by a popular uprising early in his term and was subsequently convicted for plunder, should keep his word.

"Senoida should keep the promise that he made at the time he received pardon for his plunder cases. He must stick to his word," Lagdameo said.

The CBCP president reiterated earlier positions taken by the bishops' body which frowns on Estrada's desire to seek public office anew.

Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal, who was a spiritual adviser to Estrada in the past, similarly made a call for Estrada to give up any plans for 2010. Assistant Archbishop

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GMA has powers to deal with situation—Nograles

By Norman Bordadora and Dona Pazzibugan

HOUSE LEADER YESTERDAY SAID PRESident Macapagal-Arroyo still had enough authority as Chief Executive to address the continuing increase in the price of rice and other food products in the country.

Speaker Prospero Nograles, however, said Congress would have to grant the President emergency powers if the untold food situation worsened and spiraled out of control.

"At present, the President has more than enough power and authority to deal with the situation. And logically she has been taking the necessary precautions," Nograles told the Inquirer.

"However, if the untold crisis or food shortage threatens to reach critical and calamity levels, then Congress can or must as soon as possible enact an emergency powers law which will be necessary to marshal and mobilize the resources needed," he added.

Nograles said the government must avoid the international food crisis rumor that hit prices, especially the poor, won't go berserk.

"When it comes to this, level of national interest, there won't be any majority or minority in both houses of Congress," Nograles said.

Also yesterday, Senate President Manuel Villar said that President Arroyo's promised P40.7 billion supplemental assistance package carried approval from Congress if the food production program required additional funding.

He said Malacañang had to send a supplemental budget proposal to Congress to fund the President's six-point program, called FIELDS.

Otherwise, he said, this would mean that the President merely "repackaged" existing programs already included in the P1.2-trillion national budget for 2008 without coming up with additional funding support.

Amid spiraling prices of rice and basic goods, Mr. Arroyo last April 4 announced she had ordered the release of P40.7 billion in emergency budgetary support to the agriculture and fisheries sectors.

She said FIELDS stood for fertilizer, irrigation and infrastructure, Education and Extension, loans and insurance, Dryers and other Post-harvest facilities and Seeds.

"The Constitution is clear on this: No money can leave the treasury without an appropriation from Congress," Villar said in a statement yesterday.

He said if Malacañang refused to submit a supplemental budget and insisted that the projects under FIELDS were already in the 2008 national budget, "then the conclusion is that no new projects were launched because the President simply repackaged what were already in the law."

6 Pinoys in hijacked yacht freed

By Tarra Quismundo

SIX FILIPINO CREW MEMBERS OF A French-registered luxury yacht hijacked in waters between Somalia and Yemen have been released unharmed after being held 24 days, the Department of Foreign Affairs said last night.

The DFA said the Philippine Embassy in Paris was informed by the French foreign ministry about the release of the six Filipinos.

The Filipinos were among the 26 crew members found by armed men who seized Ponant Paradise last week on board the luxury yacht, the Le Ponant.

Details of their release, including the exact time and circumstances, have yet to be known but the DFA said the Filipinos—five men and a woman—"are in good physical condition and now in the custody and care of the French Authorities with the rest of their colleagues."

"[Foreign Affairs] Secretary Alberto Romulo expresses the Philippine government's gratitude to France for the quick action and resolution of the case," the DFA said in a statement yesterday.

The foreign affairs said Philippine officials have been coordinating with French authorities for the repatriation of the Filipino crew, who were hired to work aboard the luxury yacht by Philippine manning agent Magsaysay Maritime Corp.

Gov's daughter to press raps vs Japanese

By Jeannette I. Andrade and Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE LAWYER DAUGHTER OF CEBU Governor Gwendolyn Garcia yesterday rejected the apology of the Japanese national, who allegedly punched her on the back at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, vowing instead to pursue the charges against the foreigner.

In a statement, Lawyer Ma. Fatima Garcia-Cedilla said the apology offered by Isao Tanaka, 45, was "empty because he even added insult to injury by denying he ever punched me."

Cedilla claimed that if Tanaka were truly remorseful, the Japanese should have admitted his offense. "A real apology presupposes an admission of the act," she said.

According to Cedilla, the Japanese claimed that his "gesture" was a trademark in his native land.

But she dismissed this as "preposterous."

"I can't believe he is saying that it's tradition in Japan for men to punch women," Cedilla said.

The punching incident reportedly happened while both were claiming their baggage at the commuters' hall of the terminal after their flight from Cebu.

She stressed that she would pursue her case against Tanaka as a matter of principle, that nobody on women is unacceptable in a civilized society and that no one should be allowed to get away with it.

Cedilla also stated that when she informed Tanaka that she was pursuing legal action against him, the Japanese had "arrogantly name-dropped prominent people and even contacted his police friends, one of whom came and stayed with him during the proceedings." The unidentified policeman is said to be a member of the Manila Police District.

At the Senate, Sen. Loren Legarda yesterday condemned the act of the Japanese national.

"It shows disrespect and brutality not only against the victim, Hinda Ingmar, or Garcia, Gov. Gwendolyn Cedilla, a lawyer, but against Filipino women in general," said Legarda, a strong advocate for Filipino women's rights and dignity.

Calling him a chauvinist, Legarda urged the Philippine government to "apply the full force of the law" against Tanaka, such as deporting him and banning him from the country.

Legarda said that appropriate criminal charges should be filed against Tanaka and that he should be deported after conviction and serving sentence.

"We must teach foreigners, especially the male chauvinists, to respect Filipino women, just as we teach our own women to respect all women, whether Filipino or foreigners," said Legarda.

Tanaka has been detained at the Bureau of Immigration detention facility in Taguig since April 8. He has reportedly apologized to Cedilla for the "misbehavior" incident and has denied that he punched her on the back.

Crane cuts power supply in Metro

From page A1

line in Sta. Mesa, Manila, caused a power outage from about 9 a.m. to just before noon.

The outage affected about 30 percent of the metropolis, according to Manila Electric Co. vice president for corporate communications Ilgi Cuna.

The brownout due to trouble on Tennaco's 230-kilovolt (kV) Sucat-Araneta line affected areas mostly located in southern Metro Manila—including Quezon City, Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas, Valenzuela, Sta. Mesa and Mandaluyong.

Tennaco field personnel said the hook of a tower crane being used in a construction site near SM Centerpoint in Sta. Mesa got entangled with a transmission cable, causing partial damage to the Sucat-Araneta line.

The line tripped at 8:41 a.m. yesterday.

Chain reaction

The Malaya-Araneta 230-kV line also tripped a few minutes later.

The tripping caused a load drop of 1,200 megawatts that in turn triggered an automatic shutdown of four generating plants.

Two automatic shutdowns in succession pose damage to equipment of the power plants.

The transmission line damage affected some of Meralco's substations in southern areas, causing power to go out for as long as two hours.

Tennaco's system operations group had to dispatch more electricity from power plants in north Luzon to compensate for generation loss caused by the automatic shutdown of the four plants.

Legal action

Cuna said Meralco was considering legal action against whoever was responsible for the Tennaco line tripping and for the outage.

"The unfortunate incident should serve as a reminder to those in the construction industry, most especially those involved in the day-to-day operations, to keep in mind that their actions may result in pain

consequences such as what transpired this morning," Cuna said in a statement.

"In order to minimize accidents, construction personnel must simply adhere to basic safety precautions. They should keep a very safe distance from our line facilities while working," he added.

He said Meralco had been constantly coordinating with local building officials, including affiliate organizations, to boost its construction safety information drive.

Losses for LRTA

Service disruption due to the power outage resulted in a significant loss of revenue for the Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA).

On LRT Line 1, which runs from Baclaran to Monumento, "estimated lost revenue from 8:55 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. – is P414,063," LRTA spokesperson Aldy Soriga said.

Line 1 was unable to serve 29,208 passengers during the disruption.

Jeeps said Line 2, from Santolan to Recto, lost an estimated P142,800. The Line 2 service was disrupted from 8:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m., affecting 18,000 passengers.

172 million passengers

The LRTA earned more than P2.6 billion in 2007, an almost 10-percent increase from 2006.

For 2007, it ferried a total of 172 million passengers, up 8.8 percent from the 158 million recorded in 2006. —With a report from Rica T. Olchondra

Customs agents seize P12M worth of smuggled rice

By Margaux C. Ortiz

AGENTS OF the BUREAU OF CUSTOMS (BOC) yesterday confiscated in the two major ports in Manila more than P12 million worth of rice apparently being attempted to be smuggled into the country.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales said two shipments of grains were seized by operatives of the bureau's intelligence and investigation service after their names, Jubilee Multi Trek Inc., failed to show the necessary transport permit from the National Food Authority (NFA).

Morales said Section 4.6 of Customs Memorandum Order 29-2003 allowed the bureau to confiscate the shipments that did not have proper shipping permit and import authority.

"We want to ensure that smugglers will not be able to take advantage of the high prices of commodities, especially rice," the BOC chief said.

Customs officials said the shipments arrived aboard Carrier Vessel 2-GO 1 last March 19 at the Port of Manila (POM) and the Manila International Container Port (MICP).

Morales said he immediately ordered the issuance of warrants of seizure on the shipments, adding that the bureau was complying with President Macapagal-Arroyo's recent directive to closely monitor the country's seaports to prevent rice smuggling.

"We have yet to determine the origin of the seized shipments of rice grains, but we have received some tips on the NBA," Morales said.

Customs operatives also confiscated 18 assorted cuts of sugar worth about P9.22 million.

Morales said the shipments of sugar were seized after they were found to have been wrongfully declared as rice and yellow corn.

He disclosed that the smuggled sugar, consigned to Jubilee Multi Trek Mill, came from Thailand and was transshipped via Zamboanga City.

Aside from the rice and sugar, two other customs were of smuggled clothing apparel and spare motor vehicles were also confiscated.

P1 million of the used clothing worth P3.6 million and consigned to Alma Fatin Enterprises came from Singapore and shipped through the same vessel Nhina Rhain.

Morales said importation of used clothing, or ukay-ukay, was prohibited under Customs laws.

Found in the other container were one used Mitsubishi Pajero, one used Gilera, one used Honda TMX 155, two used motorcycle Orgon, seven used mini vans with air con tools, and 36 pieces of used and assorted car doors.

The seized car and parts worth P5 million arrived at the POM through carrier vessel Christian Bussi/MV. Liberty and were consigned to R-1960 C Trading.

Corrections

IN THE APRIL 10 ISSUE, the front-page banner story, "NPA plans to trade selling price of rice"—misspelled the name of the administrator of the National Food Authority. The NFA administrator's name is Jessup—not Jerson—Navarro.

* * *

Reader's copy used their requests for corrections of personal data or writing to the following: Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Makati Avenue, Makati City. Fax No. 897-4710 to 19, e-mail address: pdi@inquirer.com.ph.

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DJ Montano strikes back at Aussie blogger

From page A1

phenomenal blog by Australian bitan Gorrell. Selfin bestsinner "DJ" Montano yesterday broke his silence to counter allegations that he blackmailed Gorrell of more P70,000 Australian dollars.

Montano, a 35-year-old businessman and former newspaper columnist, said he would take Gorrell to court to vindicate his name and that of his family and friends whom Gorrell dubbed "Giant Gang" and pilloried in his infamous blog that has generated more than two million hits in last count.

"In the beginning I didn't think it would get this serious. But now I feel victimized," he said.

He said he was forced to come out and fight since Gorrell had been dragging the names of family members and close friends.

"It has gotten out of control. The name of my family and friends are being mentioned; this is done deliberately," he said.

His godfather Benjie Lasrol admitted he and other family friends initially advised Montano to keep silent, hoping the controversy would die down.

Montano also appointed lawyers to counter lawsuits against Internet defamation.

"This is not curtailing freedom of speech but freedom of speech should not condone defamation or invasion of privacy," he said.

Montano, who admitted he had a relationship with Gorrell, denied they were into business together. He said Gorrell sent him money but they were all spent for Gorrell's living expenses when he decided to live in Boracay.

"I absolutely deny it. I am not a thief," Montano said. He added he had "absolutely nothing" to contact to Gorrell.

Montano also denounced Gorrell for bringing up the death of Ruben's sister, Joel Tanseco, just to arouse more controversy.

Montano denied selling Gorrell that Tandoo died by drug overdose, saying the autopsy report showed he died of hemorrhagic pancreatitis.

Legal action

"We're going to take [legal] action. We're willing to take this all the way," Montano said in a visit to the Inquirer yesterday.

"I'm ready to face [him] anytime. I'm not afraid of him. And I've never left [the country] contrary to what he says. I wish he'd come up with the guts to face me," the soft-spoken businessman said, referring to Gorrell as "Gorrell."

Montano was accompanied by his mother Aurora, godfather Benjie Lasrol and lawyer Jose Oliveros.

Oliveros said they were considering filing a criminal complaint for libel against Gorrell and civil cases of tort or damages in Australia and in the Philippines against the host of Gorrell's blog in a US company.

Montano said he had also written Google and Blogger.com to stop the blog, pointing out that the defamation he gets from this site a violation of the terms of use of the Internet.

"I want vindication. I want justice. I want to protect my principles and the dignity of my family and friends and the honor of the Filipino nation," he said.

He pointed out that Gorrell, in his blog, said he would also expose the "hypocrisy of your corrupt country."

Since Gorrell went to town when he set up his blog on March 6 this year, Montano said he and his family have been the subject of hate messages like "You crazy, thief ..."

"It has affected my life in so many ways. I've become infamous all of a sudden," Montano said.

Lifestyle Change

He said he had to change some of his routine activities. He even quit a teaching job, as well as writing a column for a newspaper to spare colleagues and his high-society friends in the "Giant Gang" from controversy.

"I had to change my lifestyle. I don't go to the gym anymore. If I go to the mall, people recognize me. I've changed all my contact details because they seem all pointed [to Gorrell's blog]," Montano said.

He stopped going to parties, too.

Mean messages

Montano revealed that people would throw pieces of paper with nasty messages at his cubicles like the gym.

Lasrol said many managers were also left for Montano when he and his family were billeted at a hotel in Bacolod City during that Holy Week. Agency left a room for him at the front desk. It read, "Gerry" Sanchez, their roommate were being auctioned on GorrellBlog.

Lawyer Oliveros said he also received many phone calls and as many as 45 messages on his e-mail right after he sent Gorrell a letter asking him to cease to cite Philippine laws and libel laws to name.

"Unfortunately because of this blog, so many people have prejudged me," Montano said.

He admitted the blog had put a strain on some of his friendships but he also found out who his true friends are.

Montano said he kept silent because he knew what Gorrell was saying about him was all wrong and Gorrell only wanted to extort money.

'Don't stoop to his level'

Oliveros and Lasrol said they did not want Montano to just go to another blog advising him "not to stoop down" to Gorrell's level.

"We will go to the proper legal forum," Oliveros said.

Montano said contrary to Gorrell's claims in his blog, he did not give 70,000 Australian dollars to Montano to be used for an investment.

How they met

Montano said he met Gorrell in February 2007 at the Manila Peninsula hotel during a photo shoot. "He just approached me. He was very friendly."

Gorrell asked Montano to recommend places in Manila and the rest to seek a friendship for the 10 days the Australian was here.

"He fell in love with Boracay," Montano said, and he wanted to return to the Philippines to live on the finest beach.

Before Gorrell returned in July 2007, he sent Montano money to be used as real estate for a beachfront house in Boracay.

Montano said he found a two-bedroom house on the beach which rented for P25,000 to P30,000 a month depending on the season.

The first maintenance Gorrell sent money for was a two-month advance payment, Montano said, which was about P100,000.

Internet connection

Gorrell needed a phone line and an Internet connection and other amenities for his new home and Montano did all the legwork.

Being a foreigner, Gorrell did not have a bank account nor credit cards. Montano said Gorrell had to send him the money for his living expenses.

"Those things require money. Whenever he sent, I report for his expenditures," Montano said. "I think the first time it was P500,000 to P700,000, less than half of what he claims now."

He said Gorrell spent a lot of money in Boracay, and would stay at expensive hotels when he came to Manila. Gorrell stayed in the country for seven months, he said.

"This guy lived like a king in Boracay," Montano said.

Soon the friendship became a relationship.

Violent tendencies

"I do remember the bottle so I would go to Boracay and sometimes I would fly to Manila," Montano said. "I had a relationship with him. I won't deny that, I regret it area this way."

Montano said he introduced Gorrell to his close friends such as Celine Lopez and other high-society figures.

He said Gorrell, who had a "simple background" as a florist in Australia got in like the high-living.

"He took to it very much the lessons. I think he relished that lifestyle," Montano said.

But on Dec. 25 last year, Montano said he decided to call it quits with Gorrell, whom he described as a "temperamental person with violent tendencies."

(Tomorrow: The nasty split; Britni Gorrell's story.)

Roll over Beethoven, you ...

From page A1

passed airline's proposed policy on deaf passengers, a government minister said Friday.

Bill Shorten used the example of Beethoven—who famously continued composing until he died in 1827 despite losing his hearing—to condemn policy that requires the deaf passengers by the Australian subsidiary of Singapore-based budget carrier Tiger Airways.

The policy bans deaf passengers from flying unless accompanied by a *late-paying adult over providers a* Tiger Airways' reservations agent, who could then guard the safety, Jinky told The Associated Press.

But airline spokesperson Tom Hobbs denied that the airline had such a policy, and said he was investigating why its crews and call center staff in the Philippines were telling passengers otherwise.

Shorten, Australia's parliamentary secretary for disabilities and children's services, said he telephoned the airline Friday to tell them that barring deaf people from flying alone was wrong.

"Under this, Beethoven would never have been able to catch a plane (on his own)," Shorten told Sky Television. "But because people are deaf doesn't mean that they're crippled."

A group of four deaf adults has helped a complaint with the Australian government's antidiscrimination watchdog agency after a representative of Tiger Airways Australia told them last month that they could not make an interstate flight without a carer provider who could hear, the Herald Sun newspaper reported Friday.

Widespread misunderstanding

The group was eventually permitted to take their seats on the March 4 flight but a flight attendant said they would not be allowed to fly alone again on the airline, the newspaper said.

Hobbs, Tiger Airways Australia's head of corporate communications, said the rebel manager had written the hour a note saying: "In future, as you know, you'll need to travel with a carer for safety reasons."

"We're clarifying with all staff that deaf people do not require a carer to travel with them," Hobbs said, adding that he could see an issue with widespread misunderstanding within the company.

"We are apologetic and very sorry that the people involved in this feel in any way that they've been discriminated against or upset by this in any way," he said.

Policy changed

Hobbs said his company's sister airline, Tiger Airways Singapore, had changed its policy that once required deaf passengers to be accompanied by a carer provider.

The Australian subsidiary of Singapore-based Tiger Airways recently joined the Australian domestic aviation market last December. In Australian competition allow deaf passengers to fly alone.

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Bishops seek quick OK of CARP extension bill

By Jeannette I. Andrade

CATHOLIC BISHOPS HAVE URGED THE House of Representatives to speed up the passage of the bill proposing to extend and reform the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) even as the committee level.

At a press conference yesterday, Capiz Archbishop Antonio Ledesma, chair of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines' Pastoral Board Congress concurrence, said the bill should be a priority "for the common good of the country."

"If we are looking at the causes of rural poverty today ... We cannot ignore the need for agrarian reform as a social justice provision," he said.

The CBCP first convened a National Rural Congress in 1967 to make concrete the Church's involvement in rural issues through the formation of diocesan social action centers, rural cooperatives, advocacy groups for agrarian reform, and so on.

Last year, the CBCP issued a call for a second National Rural Congress (NRC II) to review the continuing issues confronting most Filipinos living in the rural areas.

Ledesma said that majority of the country's bishops are for President Macapagal-Arroyo's endorsement of the CARP extension bill although only 30 were able to sign the letter sent to Agusan Rep. Elen Ecleo, chair of the House committee on agrarian reform, and Senate President Manuel Villar.

Former election commissioner Christian Monsod, who is a lay consultant to the NRC II, thanked the President for giving assurances that she would certify the bill as urgent. But he said Mr. Arroyo can only do so after the bill comes out of the committee level.

"The problem is in the committee. Many [endorsed congressmen are in the committee," Monsod said, although Speaker Prospero Pichay has expressed support for the bill.

Monsod said the ruling majority should start cracking the whip to align its members' votes behind the immediate passage of the bill, as the President has already committed her support for the CARP's extension and reform.

"It means that [the number of landed congressmen are with the majority party or there is a need to have some kind of influence from the leaders of the majority party," he said.

He cited need to counter the [coalition] legislators, saying, "we don't really have all the names but I think the legislators know who are those with land-based interests."

Ledesma said that Major Gen.[eral] Rep. Ignacio Arroyo, the President's brother-in-law, has been mentioned by farmer organizations as among the congressmen allied with landlord interests.

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Magdalo men seek pardon from GMA, AFP, Filipinos

By Inquirer staff

Some of the officers and enlisted men who participated in the July 27, 2003, mutiny in Makati City have asked President Arroyo, the military and the people for forgiveness.

Lawyer Rex Fernandez, spokesman for the group, said the request for pardon was made in a letter addressed to Arroyo, Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. and the Filipino people.

Fernandez said the letter was signed by 31 officers and enlisted men who were detained at Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig City after the mutiny.

"We are not in a position to judge 'em," Gambala said. "We are mere soldiers and she is our Commander in Chief... We celebrate our apology to the President."

Continuing respect

Asked if they had a message for Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and other Magdalo officers whose trial on coup d'etat charges will continue, Gambala said he continued "to respect them for their convictions ... I will always pray for them."

He thanked "the good courts," like Branch 4 (1995 graduates of the Philippine Military Academy), for reopening the path taken by the group that pleaded guilty to the charges.

Fernandez also said he and the others broke away from the Magdalo "because of differences in beliefs."

"Before, the Magdalo group already had conditions and alliances with political interest groups, with some Left-leaning groups, and sadly, we are the ones [detained] today," Fernandez said.

"When we went to Oakwood, that's what we were up to. Now, we do not want to make it possible to meddle in politics and even to have alliances with such leaning groups," he said.

Political alliances

He declined to elaborate on the Magdalo's political alliances. But he said the Philippines' political contends had always been "a game of political battle, always between the opposition and the administration."

Lt. Col. Antonio Trillanes, the Army graduate-senator, told Gambala et al. had sought his permission to hold a press conference to refute speculations that they had forged a deal with the government, and to grant requests for interviews.

Torres said he forwarded the request to Trillanes, who endorsed it to Esperon, who approved it.

A number of Army officials were present at the press conference. With reports from Alexis Romero, Jerome Aning and Norman Bordadora

COMMON HEARTS at the Philippine Army clubhouse in Fort Bonifacio during the press conference with Army Capts. Roscoe Gambala and Wilfredo Flores as reporters who ask for forgiveness not only from President Arroyo but also from the Filipino people. INQUIRER

Some of the officers and enlisted men who participated in the July 27, 2003, mutiny in Makati City have asked President Arroyo, the military and the people for forgiveness.

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INQUIRER VISITORS
Ibrahim Ambassador Ali Mujtaba Rasulzhand, right, recently paid a courtesy call on the Philippine Daily Inquirer's two top executives Marlen B. Primo, third from left, PDI chairman of the board, and Alexandra "Sandy" Prieto-Romualdez, PDI president and CEO. At left is diplomatic attaché Farhad Mullah Abdujabbar.

Bangkok-based flight grounded

By Tarra Quismundo

FOR REASONS STILL UNCLEAR, CEBU PACIFIC air canceled an evening flight to Bangkok on Thursday, stranding 136 passengers until today.

Cebu Pacific Flight 5J-931 was grounded by "technical issues" Thursday night, prompting the airline to cancel the flight and field an extra one today to carry stranded passengers. The airline, however, did not expound on the technical problem except to say that it was "plane-related."

"We apologize for the inconvenience to our passengers but their safety is our utmost concern. We are doing our best to make them comfortable while they wait for their flight tomorrow," the airline said in a statement.

Most of the passengers were billeted to hotels and their flights today, while roughly 20 were booked in other airlines for flights to Bangkok on Friday, the airline said.

Neither the Air Transportation Office's Manila Control Tower nor its Operations Center were given a report on the incident.

The flight cancellation came amid Cebu Pacific's expansion to regional routes. Just this month, the airline launched direct flights from Cebu to Bangkok and Macau, and direct service from Manila to Vietnamese cities Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh.

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COUNTRY REPORT AT UNHRC

RP vows protection of human rights

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE PHILIPPINES IS SET TO make new commitments to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to ensure that the human rights of every Filipino are respected and protected by the foreign administration, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said yesterday.

Reached by phone in Geneva, Switzerland, Ermita told reporters of the government's "unwavering commitment on human rights matters" in meta-cultural, social and economic spheres, and other areas being undertaken to address extrajudicial killings.

Ermita was scheduled to defend the human rights record of the seven-year Arroyo administration yesterday before the UNHRC as part of the first-ever Universal Periodic Review (UPR) being held at UN headquarters in Geneva.

The Philippines is among the 15 countries that are undergoing the UPR in the first two-week session until all the 192 UN member states shall have been examined by 2011.

The Philippines is to the first batch to undergo review.

Representative of the country led by Ermita were to answer questions from representatives of the 47 countries that make up the council, and relay reviews from different sectors, including the report of the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings.

He said that besides the dossier presented to the United Nations in October 2007, the high-ranking delegation composed of officials from the justice, social welfare, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women and the National Economic and Development Authority would apprise the world body on the holistic approach employed by the government to addressing human rights.

INDUSTRON INC

Save power, Meralco asks consumers

By Abigail L. Ho

THE MANILA ELECTRIC CO. IS URGING consumers to conserve and use energy wisely to prevent demand from shooting up and effectively erase from billowing rate hikes in 2009.

"The hot summer months usually raise the consumption levels of our customers," said Elpi Cura, Meralco vice president for corporate communications.

He said the school vacation, with students staying mostly at home, would boost demand further next June.

But with the proper use of appliances, households will not only save on electricity expenses but also help reduce overall demand during traditionally high-demand months, Cura said.

Simple tips

"Very simple tips such as using compact fluorescent light instead of incandescent bulbs, doing your ironing at one time and opening refrigerators only when needed will help," he said.

Customers are also advised to ensure that their appliances are well-maintained so they can better cope with increased usage.

The Energy Regulatory Commission has assured consumers that Meralco's pending petition for a rate hike would not take effect this summer.

ERC chairman Rodolfo Albano earlier said that hearings and comprehensive evaluation still needed to be undertaken before the ERC can issue a provisional approval, if warranted.

Following the ERC's approval of Meralco's performance-based regulation (PBR) application, which included the maximum average price (MAP) that the distribution utility can charge from 2007 to 2011, the company also had to apply for new distribution rates applying the MAP.

Meralco asked the ERC to allow it to charge P1.471 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) this year, P1.71 per kWh in 2009, P1.96 per kWh in 2010 and P2.29 per kWh in 2011.

The ERC, however, only allowed Meralco to charge a maximum of P1.167 per kWh this year, P1.268 per kWh in 2009, P1.361 per kWh in 2010 and P1.471 per kWh in 2011.

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'Rice price crisis, not food crisis;' int'l donors to meet

By Doris G. Bongcac

"What we want to do is encourage Filipino farmers to produce more, and you don't do that by imposing an artificial pricing mechanism to control their profit. You have to give them a signal that if prices produce food," Zeigler said.

5 critical reasons

Top industrial Rice-critical reasons behind the current rice situation:

- A supply largely affected by an increased demand resulting from rising population.
- Climate change.
- Booming demand for biofuels.
- Continuous conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural use.
- Neglect of irrigation facilities.

"But these are solutions, and we are now never prepared from when we are hurting," he said.

Top said the Philippines, through the IRRI, had called international donors to a meeting to brainstorm and solutions addressing production and factors affecting production.

6 key issues

He said the meeting should include developed and developing countries and focus on increased collaboration to deal with the problems facing the

A SOLEMN mask guard as cargo trucks ride to the government-rationed rice outside an NFA warehouse in Manila on Friday AP

production and the need for increased food output in the countries.

Prof. Elizabeth Woods, the newly appointed chair of the IRRI board of trustees, said the problems related to rice production and supply in Asia over the past year were "cause for serious concern, but not for panic."

"IRRI and its partners should double rice productivity problem in Asia in the 1960s and '70s, and we can do it again. What we need is the commitment support of donors and policymakers, as well as better awareness among the media and general public of the problems we face," Woods said.

His key theme: our focus in Asia is to increase productivity to reduce existing yield gaps; accelerate in the delivery of new production technologies; in the introduction of higher-yielding rice varieties, and in research on rice varieties, strengthening and upgrading of rice breeding and research pipelines; and developing a new generation of rice scientists.

Meanwhile, Top announced that the Philippines had procured some 70,000 metric tons of rice under the GSR 2013 and it export payments program through a tender conducted in the United States on April 16.

No need for panic-buying

"We will continue to bid until we get the desired volume. We dropped the bids for the remaining 10,000 MT because they were too expensive, at some $1,000 a metric ton," he said.

In Manila, Cagayan de Oro Archbishop Antonio Ledesma said there was a sufficient rice supply and the public did not have to resort to panic-buying.

Ledesma, who chairs the Episcopal Social Concerns Commission, told the Inquirer that the appeal against panic-buying was a message issued also by the earlier call of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines for rice traders not to hoard their goods.

Like Top, Ledesma said what was happening was not more a "rice price crisis" than a "rice crisis," where a number of factors—including bad rice business, climate change, natural disasters, and the dry season—contributed to the sudden exorbitant increase in the costs of the primary staple.

Should the panic-buying continue, the CBCP's permanent council is to convene in May to issue a statement making a similar call, he said.

Ledesma called on consumers to buy enough rice for their family and on households to "follow their normal budgeting."

Partnership with DA

"This is also the reason for the flagging by Pandesal Bakers Association Inc. of NFA (National Food Authority)'s rice and has limited the sale of the rice to three kilograms per buyer," he said.

In a press conference yesterday at the CBCP head office in Intramuros, Manila, Manila Archbishop Broderick Pabillo said the NFA rice distribution arrangement with the Department of Agriculture (DA) was only for the duration of the "crisis."

Pabillo, who chairs the CBCP's National Secretariat for Social Action/Justice and Peace, said the partnership with the DA had been going on for two to three years. However, he said, the supply of NFA rice given to the Manna network was limited, and not all of the targeted beneficiaries, the poorest of the poor in the communities, had been able to avail themselves of the staple.

Not permanent

He said the IRRI recent tapping of the Manna network was intended to strengthen the continuing (food) project.

"This [arrangement with the DA] should not be permanent," Pabillo said, pointing out that the Church has the capability in terms of human resources and expertise to become the permanent distributor of NFA rice.

He stressed that the agreement with the SA only required the Manna to ensure that NFA rice was distributed to some 300 to 500 percent of the poor in different communities, according to Mons Ledesma.

Pabillo also said the diocese would come up with a list of recipients who had previously been surveyed and certified to be among the poorest in the communities.

He said Caritas Manila would be implementing the project.

With a report from Aurea Calica
E-mail: dgbongcac@inquirer.net

URGENT PLEA Bishops urge President Aquino to notify the bill on CARP reforms and extension as urgent. Manila Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Pabillo reads the bishops' letter to Congress on the same subject. With him at the press conference on Friday are (from left) Dr. Teodoro Mendiola of UP Los Baños, Christian Monsod and Cagayan de Oro Bishop Antonio Ledesma. EDWIN BACASMAS

NBI told to focus on rice hoarders, not smugglers

By Jeannette I. Andrade

part of the Anti-Rice Hoarding Task Force, has inspected six warehouses in Metro Manila and neighboring provinces, and found violations. Like the mishandling of NFA rice and lack of import permits.

But the handlings of NFA rice have been caught since.

Irritated!

The President did not conceal her irritation, frowning at times while being updated by NBI Acting Rice Hoarding Task Force chief Ric Diaz and NBI anticorruption unit investigation chief Salvador Mendoza.

She said time would be wasted if the agencies concentrated on import violations.

"Kasi [since] no illegal importation yet as now, because it's liberalized. So the more you investigate there, the less investigation will happen in what we're really assigning them tools, which is hoarding, profiteering and price gouging," Mr Aquino said.

"The direction to some assorted rice ... that's what we want them to take care of, not checking whether there have permits or not because [for] the private sector can import. The government is not supposed to import," she said.

Said Diaz: "At my end, Sue Ecoffeing there might be instances wherein there are imported rice and there are also some in the same warehouse. So we just reported it."

In an interview after the briefing, NBI Director Director Montesing said he believed the President was "satisfied" with the bureau's efforts and that there was no need to relay.

At least three warehouses owners found violating provisions of Presidential Decree No. 4 (National Grains Authority Act) were summoned to the NBI on Monday to submit their documents.

They were Eleanor Rodriguez of Bishopsgate Marketing in Valenzuela, Gloria Reyes of Isabela Greenfields Corp. in Ilocos, Manila, and Administrator del Rosario of Philippine Grain in Bulacan.

"I think [Mr Aseoyo is] satisfied with the status, and by next week she will be expecting the report and the filing of charges. Where are the smugglers, we look at all angles ... We still do the same thing because our focus is to see if there's really hoarding," Montesing said.

He added that the NBI would immediately file cases in the next day if the documents were found insufficient.

The President said she expected the NBI to prosecute violators, "hopefully all the way up to conviction."

How to balance farmer and consumer interests

By Jeannette I. Andrade

received an average budget of only P16.7 billion, half the mandated amount.

It is therefore as not welcome that President Aquino-Arroyo has announced a P44.7-billion support for food supply.

It is hoped that the five-year-rice plan she started in 2002, but abandoned in 2005 with new management, will be recommitted and completed this year. This way, the budget for rice will be spent effectively, guided by this plan, instead of being subjected to possible political whims and knee-jerk reactions.

Impact on farmers

In their visit April 1 local conference, Alyansa Agribusiness leaders representing all agricultural commodities said that the rice farmers should be given an increase in the government's support price for rice. The leaders noted that over the years, this price had barely increased, and was much lower than the inflation rate.

Take, for example, the support price for palay (unhusked rice) in the province of Nueva Ecija. In 2002, the support price was P9.90 per kilo. In 2012, it was P11.90 per kilo. This is an increase of only 20 percent in 10 years. "A kilo of chocolate now which was being sold two years ago at P95 was retailed at P82 per kilo yesterday." That is a 20-percent price increase in one day. Obviously, the retailers cost did not go up by that much.

This phenomenon of support price increases happening not just for fancy chocolates, but also to the well-milled rice bought by the less fortunate great majority of our people.

An NFA official was quoted in news newspapers as saying that the justified retail price is double the farmgate price. Partly because of this and the announced new MSP (farmgate price of P17, the retail price has been increasing recently from P28 toward P34.

Most of all, the well-milled rice in the market today was bought at lower than the very recently announced P17 farmgate price. Therefore, the increased profits are going not to the farmers, but to the traders and retailers, all at the expense of the consumers.

Secondly, the long lines for IRRI that have given the impression that there is a rice shortage, which in turn motivates hoarding prices. The shortage is not to be, but only in IRRI rice. This is sold at P28.25 per kilo, more below the alternative well-milled rice at more than P35 per kilo. Of course, there will be long lines, which will serve to satisfied because those will stop, yes not be enough cheap IRRI rice.

It is true that retail price is normally about double the farmgate price. But this should not necessarily be followed. If the retailers and traders are satisfied with the same level of their profits, they should pass on to the consumers only the actual cost increases.

In the table above, the increases in farmgate price is 96.9 if the actual average retail price in 2006 was P24 (which is 92 more than double the price of the farmgate price), then the retail price should be P30, not P34.

It's happening again

But what should be the suggested retail rice price today? Given that the farmgate price of which the current rice supply was around was below P17, and that there are added justifiable distribution costs that should be considered, the answer can best be given in a meeting with the traders and retailers themselves.

No to price controls

In 2006, when there was a similar perceived rice shortage and prices were increasing instead of retailers' levels, I participated in such a meeting. The retailers and traders, together with DTI and DA officials, suggested that the government should come out with a suggested retail price. It was below the prevailing market price that was escalating very rapidly then, a deja vu phenomenon that is happening today.

We agree with Trade Secretary Rubert Borlos that there should be no price controls, as there were no price controls in 2006. But that year, the suggested retail price [only for well-milled rice] previously agreed upon by the traders and retailers, were posted in the areas/places where most market price rings. This successfully brought down the price of well-milled rice.

Though there was no price control, retailers who sold at prices much higher than the suggested retail price were systematically subject to their justification and to black list[ing] prices. This was sufficient motivation for them to charge a fair price.

We recommend that this mechanism again be used to balance farmer and consumer interests. If the consumers [using the almost daily retail] price increases, we cry: "The consumer be hurting."

[The author is the chair of Agrinewsch, former secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects, and former undersecretary for agriculture, and author of many articles on agriculture. E-mail: agrinewsch-phil@yahoo.com or cyrildee@203.211.121.

FARMER PROFIT BY SEED CATEGORY

	Popular* (2.8 ton/ha yield in 2.4 million hectares)		Certified (4.7 ton/ha yield in 1.6 million hectares)		Hybrid (8.2 ton/ha yield in 0.3 million hectares)	
	2006	2008	2006	2008	2006	2008
Farmgate price (per kg)	P10.30	P17	P10.30	P17	P10.30	P17
Revenue/hectare	P30,324	P47,600	P50,901	P79,900	P80,897	P139,080
Profit/hectare	P1,013	P14,000	P21,590	P49,910	P55,588	P72,111
Return on investment	3%	46%	74%	139%	111%	312%

*Moving from popular to certified and hybrid seeds alone can already eliminate our rice production shortage.

WORLD YOUTH DAY

RP slots have few takers

By Tarra Quismundo

PHILIPPINE APOSTOLATE to attend a major Catholic pilgrimage called World Youth Day (WYD) are in Sydney this July are coming in at a trickle, according to a Philippine church official.

Fr. Gonzaguedo Gregorio, executive secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' (CBCP) youth commission, said yesterday that the Philippines might fall short of the initially projected 5,000-member Philippine delegation flying to Sydney for the 23rd global gathering set on July 15 to 20.

"While we have a projected number, the turnout of applications is really low ... because one of the requirements is that participants need an endorsement from a local Bishop," said Gregorio of the CBCP's Episcopal Commission on the Youth (ECY).

"So far as deadline, orientation of motivations as one level, there's already a screening of applications," said the priest on the sidelines of the Australian Embassy's information session on the Sydney booking, visa processing and other travel requirements for pilgrims.

Applications may be routed through the ECY or individual youth organizations could send them directly to the Australian Embassy. All applications must satisfy the endorsement of a local bishop, said Christian Aussie, a senior immigration officer at the Australian Embassy.

So far, there have been 274 group registrations at the Australian Embassy representing the interests of some 5,300 participants.

3 months to go

But the initial applications filed for the event only total 1,331, according to Geoff Morris, director of Pilgrim Services and Support of the WYD 2008 organizing team.

With just three months to go before the meeting, the embassy in Manila has received 300 visa applications, of which 125 have been approved.

At this rate, Gregorio said the Philippines might only muster half of the minimum, as touted figure based on the "historical experience of recent" from Philippine youth organizations, including those in dioceses and schools.

Asked why so few participants are going, the priest said: "I owe that to the organizers. With the set-up [on Australia], the cost might be on jurisdictions. Most participants are young people who still depend on their families."

Gregorio said there could be 2,000 to 3,000 Filipinos participating in the Sydney gathering, of which some 500 to 800 might come from the ECY. This was his "conservative" estimate.

Australia is aiming for an attendance of 500,000 with an estimated cost-fourth expected to be foreigners.

The Philippines has yet to be sanctioned for gathering 6 million participants when it hosted the WYD in 1995.

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OPINION

Small player

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION IS "ASKING FOR trouble" if it would go along with the proposal of the National Food Authority to increase the price of the rice it is selling in the public, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. warned the other day. "Raising prices now would have a double effect: [it will] raise the profits of rice traders and make it difficult for the people to afford it," Pimentel said. "Hunger looms on Law."

EDITORIAL

That warning may not be necessary. With the prices of commercial rice varieties soaring to unprecedented highs and with the lines in NFA outlets getting longer, there is nothing the administration would like better than to maintain pressure on prices and expand the agency's reach to selling the staple. The last thing an administration already beleaguered by political scandals and suffering from very low approval ratings would want to do is to multiply the number of hungry people, who could turn into angry mobs rioting in the streets like what has been happening in some countries where food supplies have run low and prices have risen sky-high. At this time when panic seems to be starting to set in, it would be foolish to even suggest raising prices, like NFA officials have done. As Speaker Prospero Nograles, a close ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo, said in reaction to the NFA proposal, "I don't think this is a wise idea, when the people are sweating under the scorching heat of the sun, living just for two kilos of rice."

But for how long can the government keep the price of rice at its present level? The NFA now buys palay at P17 a kilo. That should translate to a selling price of P34 a kilo for milled rice, according to NFA officials, assuming that the government agency loses P15.75 for every kilo it sells at P18.25. In the case of imported rice, the subsidy is about P18 per kilo based on a purchase price of $700 per ton. Under these terms and at its current level of buying and selling, it has been estimated that the NFA would lose close to P50 billion a year. Where will the government get that kind of money? How will it reallocate such a huge sum from the budget without sacrificing its infrastructure construction programs and its goal of curbing the deficit and balancing the budget in 2013?

In theory, the NFA exists to help moderate prices while also providing support to farmers by guaranteeing a good price for their products. It has not had much success in doing either of these things. More so now when world food prices, including that of rice, have been shooting up and reaching record highs. While the NFA has maintained its selling price at P18.25 a kilo, this has not held back traders from pricing commercial rice at more than P50 a kilo, with some fancy varieties going for as much as P80. Neither is it going to be of much help in encouraging farmers to plant more by making these rare more sweet traders are the ones who are making a killing in the tight supply situation that we have now. For instance, in some parts of Leyte where the harvest is now in full swing, rice buyers peg the price at P520 per sack of 43 kilos. That is about P5 less than the NFA support price of P17 per kilo, but the NFA can only buy so much of the harvest, if at all.

The reason is simple: the NFA is a small player in the business. It will remain so unless the government infuses the agency with really huge sums of money that would allow it to control, say, 10 percent of the market. And those are amounts the government obviously cannot afford.

Besides, there is a growing consensus that price subsidies don't work. A price subsidy, like what the NFA is doing now, benefits both the poor and the non-poor. The more effective way to alleviate poverty and hunger is to help the poor and hungry by directly giving them food or money. If the government must absolutely subsidize anything, it should not be consumption but production.

Somewhere down the road, the NFA will have to go. But not yet and not now. But even as the government moves to avert a rice shortage and keep it affordable, it should now commit itself to achieve rice self-sufficiency at the earliest time possible.

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Rice: a policy blind spot

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

THE CROWING LINES OF THE URBAN POOR seeking their daily ration of rice are images suffused with political meaning. Any regime that leaves its politics cannot fail to see political danger looming ahead. For nothing illustrates more sharply a crisis spinning out of control than angry people scrambling for food.

The Arroyo government is aware of this, and now is adopting quick, last measures to arrest an imminent disaster. It is removing the penal statutes of the world for available rice and wheat at any price. It is threatening rice traders who dare be hoarding rice with instant imprisonment. It is enlisting the help of the archdiocese of Manila by the Catholic Church, to distribute the remaining commodity.

Beyond these short-term survival measures, the government has no substantive program to ensure rice and food security in the country. We can grow rice ourselves or we can import it. Whatever lip service the government now pays to importing local rice production, it cannot deny that importation has long been its default answer to the country's rice requirements. Importation through the National Food Authority is cultural rebuilding its abandoned agricultural sector. But, more importantly, as every political operator knows, it is also a source of political leverage and a quick source of political funds.

It is not the first time the country has had a rice crisis, but past instances of rice scarcity were mainly caused by almost-bad weather or a bad crop information. Rice importation was a contingency measure meant to address an emergency. Today, rice imports have become a permanent feature of our food situation, in much the same way the export of Filipino workers has become a major indispensable component of our employment program. As a result, we have become "highly vulnerable" than ever to the instabilities of the global food market.

The present rice crisis reconfirms particular**ities in global demand and supply that are beyond our control. Food prices are going up everywhere, echoing the phenomenal rise in the price of petroleum products. There is very little that a small nation like ours can do to reverse this situation.**

But we can do something to shield ourselves from the worst effects of what appears to be a long-term global food crisis. We can stop growing our basic food requirements all over again even if it may seem foolish today to aim for anything more self-sufficiency. Our economy is blessed with abundant agricultural land, even if we have become almost totally addicted to cheap production value by treating it merely as vacant space.

It would require tremendous will on the part of our national leadership to accomplish this, but this is what political responsibility ultimately means. We have to begin with a clear-minded review of how a once-living agricultural economy threw away its natural advantages in exchange for the short-term gains of a service economy based primarily on the savings of organized workers.

No one will easily claim responsibility for this disastrous shift. For indeed the sad story of Philippine agriculture is a long complex narrative of unsound choices forced upon people, and a policy environment that consigned agriculture to foreign neglect. It is not an exaggeration to say that over the last three decades at least, our leaders have, by their economic decisions and directives, discouraged Filipinos from pursuing agriculture as a way of life. As a result, farming schools and colleges of agriculture, that once flourished all over the country, have declined in importance or have realigned their courses away from farming in order to survive.

We kind the future by what we do or fail to do in the present. By launching an agro-industrial program that through such loopholes, we forced landowners to stop planting while waiting to reflect the re-classification or conversion of their property to non-agricultural use. By not giving them support services, we forced small farmers and land reform beneficiaries to sell their farms and use the money to get overseas work. By importing rice in huge quantities in order to assure steady supply at regulated prices, we made it difficult for local rice growers to sell at prices that would allow them to recover their costs.

The dismantling of agriculture in our country is indeed not a deliberate policy. It has been accomplished rather by a series of thoughtless omissions. These omissions are the direct result of a way of seeing the world through the auto pilot of OFW remittances. This perspective has exiled Philippine agriculture to a ghetto of blind spot.

By this amazing act of willful blindness, we have failed to see what the widening paralysis of the farm lands all across the country are telling us. We have not noticed the overnight sprouting of housing projects on what used to be fertile irrigated farm lands. The easy availability of cheap imported rice has concealed from the general public the erosion of local agriculture. The steady, steady outflow of Filipino workers, now beyond the one-million mark, has failed to alarm us. For we have conditioned ourselves to associate it only with the inflow of remittances, rather than with the collapse of the rural economy.

The rice crisis, which can only become worse, forces us into a "grenada mode"—a change of frame that will allow us hopefully to see what our blind spots have hidden from us.

• • •

Comments to public.lives@gmail.com

Ridiculous

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

IT WAS ON THE FACE OF IT AN OBSERVABLE run-of-the-mill invitation from Cheche Lazaro, **extended by Stevie Evangelista, to discuss the** contributions of the boycott to "Mahalin Story," in particular, and media responsibility, in general, on the "Mahalin to Korea" program. Nothing extraordinary, because the applicable principle is the same, whatever the circumstance. When one makes a mistake, one owns up to it, and one apologizes for it. But another way never even deigned an indefensible position.

I had no idea what the other guests would be, and it was a pleasant surprise to see Inquirer publisher Isagani Yambot, as well as BusinessWorld editorial board chairman Sergio Lanuza, Ben Lualhati (convenor of Media Watch), as well as lawyer Edwin Lacierda. But I have known them for a very long time, and I have him more for his acting and directing than anything else. Ours and Sergio I consider professional journalists of the highest caliber and with the highest integrity. They will neither give nor take any favors. So I was flattered that Cheche would be in the company, and looked forward to a stimulating conversation. My only request to Stevie was to schedule my appearance as early as possible, because I had another appointment I did not want to miss.

Which is why I was placed in the first segment of the discussion. I found, and discovered that Chit Pedroso would be part of the segment, via phone patch. Frankly, it was only then that I found out that Chit had written a column in the line concerning the boycott for publishing and headlining what turned out to be a totally erroneous news story that Mahalin was going to be the "surprise" winner of Sen. Imelda Lauson regarding the UN deal.

Lichi Valdez, who was sitting in for Cheche, began by asking Cesar Saloma, such a nice calm person, (and admitted that it was a rotational mistake, for which the Inquirer issued a public apology on the front page the following day. He revealed that the newspaper also initiated an internal investigation into the matter, from which he has gathered, although the final report and recommendations have not yet been submitted, that Inquirer reporter Tony Bautista received the information from a hometown reliable source, and that a senior editor had received similar information from another source. Both also revealed that those in the Inquirer were in the process of getting a new senior editor, arguing against the non-publication, but they were overruled by a more senior editor.

Lichi asked the obvious question: Why didn't Bautista check with Mahlan? The implication, correctly, being that this was a quick, and elementary rule in news reporting. Saloma admitted that it was merely a major lapse on Bautista's part (but he didn't try to contact Mahalin because he assumed that Mahalin was already in a subdivision and was inconsommunicado.

Listening to this explanation, I thought the Inquirer's behavior was unconscionable: a mistake was made, an apology was offered, an investigation was conducted, presumably not only to find out how the mistake was made but also to ensure that it does not happen again. End of story. What remained only, as far as I was concerned, was that in the interests of transparency and accountability, the Inquirer reveal the contents of that report to its reading public. But in fact, after all, if we insist on transparency and accountability in others, we must practice it ourselves.

Chit Pedroso, however, wasn't having any of it. Why should Mahalin be in a subdivision, when he is a very straightforward person? [Does that mean that people who go to subdivisions are not straightforward? Ask asking]. **She herself did not know Mahalin's phone** number, but she was able to get it easily, and was able to call Mahalin.

It was as if Yambot's admission that the person had goofed badly, and that the Inquirer had goofed badly as well, left no dent ears. Pedroso thrust, apparently written in her Watch 15 column (Lichi quoted from it; I don't subscribe to the line), was that the Mahalin story was a deliberate ploy by the boycott to mislead the reading public.

But what reason would the boycott have for deliberately misleading the public? asked Lichi. How is not an exact quote... the question led to do with motives that could be used to [illegible].

I could almost hear a "Huh?" in Chit's reply: "I mean, the boycott has been committed in promoting a certain agenda which is really behind anything that can bring down this government and oust the President."

I think I laughed out loud. I have yet to see a sign of the sheet. It was such a ridiculous assumption, at least as baseless as Inquirer's assumption that Mahalin was incommunicado in a subdivision.

Bring down THIS government? Oust THIS President? As far as I can remember, the issues that have pitching the resignations of every administration from Cory onwards—issues which are equally unholy as it were.

In all my time with the boycott [also BusinessWorld], I have not once been censored or interfered with. Which is more than I can say for Chit's paper—although only after Serge Belmonte joined away. I used to write for it, and every time I wrote about Santo Tan, a controversial would come so low it made your head spin. Once the reply was published in the column after the column came out. The last straw was when a line column was not printed at all. I quit.

People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.

The important right of civil disobedience

IN A RECENT TILE ON "SURVIVING THE AUsan Universe" the CEOs and other opinion leaders in the business, I presented cross-country data on Human Development Index and Corruption Perceptions Index and showed a negative correlation between the two. It is very low rates of ranking elevation and business. It is a very low score in ranking elevation and business. It is very low score in ranking elevation and business. It is very low score in ranking elevation and business. It is

Commercial slips showing?

A TV COMMERCIAL showing mom and son painting a door of their house is a refreshing example of good family values. However, when you look at their outfits while doing a painting job, it seems mom and son are spreading a kinda dry putty in a wall, like in Rockwall or Dulcolax. Colgate, hello!

Then, there is this lovely couple, like in introducing her to his parents, friends offer meal to the pair particularly to the beautiful girlfriend. The hostess says like a feast, as if she came from starvation camp somewhere in God-forsaken land, because she said like a pig. And there, she bows too. Still, the parents are smiling as if saying, "This is the right girl for our son." Absolutely non-values here. Hello, KBC?

A point ad inside the business section of our favorite daily states: "Prime Time Deposit 0.0% " (capitalized.) Asterisk says (in fine prints, of course): "Rates is per annum and subject to change without prior notice." Guaranteed but subject to change, huh? Pilibeh, hello!

—MIKEL AGONY,
mike.ahonte@gmail.com

Veterans to gain from VMMC property conversion

THIS REFERS TO THE MARCH 26 column of Neal H. Cruz.

Pie filed it out and understandable that Cruz's flawed and divisive assupersonalist of the plan to develop the site of the Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC) has given the impression that the Department of Defense has been remiss in protecting the welfare and interests of our veterans. The plan is a "stab in the back" of our war veterans who "will be deprived of their hospital" when the development is finished it, Cruz said. He also suggested that our veterans should settle "will get for commissions" once the plan is implemented. These conjectures, which could mislead and confuse the readers, compelled to clarify this issue.

The VMMC is part of the integrated plan to develop a 259-hectare central business district in Quezon City. This plan is sanctioned under Executive Order No. 648 ("Rationalizing And Speeding Up The Development Of The Land Said North "Imagine And The Veterans Memorial Area Of Quezon City, As A Well-Planned, Integrated And Environmentally Balanced Mixed-Use Development Model?"). This order also created the Urban Triangle Development (UTDev) Commission which has been tasked to prepare and manage the Master Development Plan for Quezon City's Central Business District. The commission is co-chaired by Vice President Noli de Castro (also the chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council), and Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte.

TriDev is in the process of finalizing the development plan of the Development City Central Business District. The development of the VMMC area is a mixed-use community with residential zones has been proposed.

Contrary to Cruz's claim, the redevelopment of the VMMC area will not deprive our veterans of medical services.

Before the end of 2007, Vice President De Castro and Mayor Belmonte invited [veteran Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. to a meeting where they presented the VMMC development plan. In that meeting, the secretary insisted that before allowing develop-

ment activities in the VMMC property, the following conditions should first be fulfilled:

- **A complete functional replication of the VMMC and its facilities.**
- **The relocation of VMMC to a more suitable site within the TriDev area.**
- **A fair share of the revenues from the development of VMMC property should be set aside to support and sustain the operations of a modern medical center for Filipino veterans.**

These conditions seek to protect the welfare and interests of our veterans by ensuring that they have access to the medical services and facilities of the hospital. In other words, no hospital post will be demolished, no equipment will be removed from the VMMC and no patch of land in that property will be dug up unless these three conditions are first met. The secretary will stand by this position.

—HILDON S. VICHOSO,
spokesperson
and head executive assistant
to the secretary
of national defense,
Department of National Defense

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

LETTERS

Aviation industry a sacred cow?

WITH THE COST OF OIL AT $110 per barrel, I cannot help but wonder why the aviation industry was not included in the recent energy summit.

In the entire three-day summit, there was no speaker representing the industry to mention exempted from the government policy on lack of efficiency and fuel conservation?

During the summit, 80 true [Association of Power Regional Executives of the National Agency, Region 71 submitted a resolution "To Rationalize The Domestic Industrial Failure" to the summit. If adopted, would have the following benefits for the country:

1. Save about $80 million liters of aviation fuel a year.
2. Prevent the emission of 1222 gases by not burning $80 million liters of aviation gas (our contribution to a total global warming).
3. Reduce airfare by about 30 percent.
4. Rationalize air service to about 40 more provinces that have airports neglected for nine years now.
5. Enhance domestic tourism and local employment.

If the proposal is adopted, it will make the Philippine Airspace Development Corp. (PADC), a government corporation, a revenue-generating agency instead of just being depressingly unhealthy.

Unfortunately, it appears that the government has chosen to ignore this infrastructure anomaly. Why? Is aviation not exempted from the program to save fuel? Is aviation a sacred cow?

—ANTHONY B. OPPEL
94 Pinot Amaholic,
Maria Luisa Park,
Banilad, Cebu City

Not an enemy of journalists

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO RAMON Tulfo's column "An appeal to Ate Imgenio," (Inquirer, 4/5/08).

Let me be clear: I'm not an enemy of journalists. I have never been and I will never be. Not like anyone else, I feel pain—not just for me but also for my family—when people denigrate me, person and reputation with lies. It is human instinct to defend oneself from harm, in accordance with our laws. For this reason, I filed a libel case against Alex Adonis and a string of media men who published fabricated stories about me.

I have since withdrawn all the libel cases I filed against the others after they issued their respective public apology and admitted publicly that they did not have a single basis for their stories. Even Mayor, from which Adonis pulled up his story published a public apology in to May 27, 2006 issue, admitting that its various left stories in desinformation that Adonis done the story. I would have done with Adonis the libel case against him.

Moreover, it was Adonis' negligence and disrespect of our legal processes that put him in jail. When the case was filed in court, the [unqualified] and never attended the hearings. In fact, he remained a fugitive until the promulgation of the decision that found him guilty beyond reasonable doubt. The trial court judge could not have decided otherwise; he never presented any defense to refute the fact that his malicious attacks against me were all fabricated.

His claim that he could not afford a lawyer to justify his not defending himself in court sadly does not hold water. There are many pro-bono lawyers who are willing to act as counsels for needy men. There are many organizations such as the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas, the National Press Club and the United Union of Journalists of the Philippines, which have helped him secure a competent counsel had he asked for their assistance. It saddens me that none of these organizations made any effort to assist him when the same is very easy to court, since they had built to my highest defense of my person and reputation.

Let me stress that once a verdict is handed down by a court, not even the plaintiff can revoke it. Adonis has to just rot because of my case as he has become the court decided that he should be.

My proposal to free journalist is bad case out of the lessons I learned from Adonis' case. I filed this bill (House Bill 3662) precisely to protect the rights of honest press freedom and responsible journalism. If this bill will be enacted into law, I will be the first to call for Adonis' release.

With my proposal, I believe that the imprisonment of a higher bar remedies set of lines would be enough to make the media practitioners more responsible in performing their vocation without diminishing the exercise of their constitutional rights to information and freedom of speech.

I hope that I have clarified my position on this issue.

—FERDINAND C. ROMUALDO,
speaker,
House of Representatives

Positive news, keep it up, Inquirer!

I READ THE MARCH 23 EDITION OF the Inquirer with delight. I am writing this to congratulate you and ask for the very positive, balanced news on the front page!

I rarely read positive news headlines in newspapers, including the Inquirer. I used to subscribe to another paper. I switched to the Inquirer when I compared the news and **banking** stories. **Keep up the banking** in good news and media for the greater good. God bless.

—EDDY KHIN

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Conflicting claims call for full-blown trial

THIS IS IN REACTION TO SOLITA MONSOD'S column "Justice a few minutes away" (Inquirer, 3/28/08).

The column was about the case filed against Lamitan Commander for the crime of murder, the primary issue of which is now pending with the Court of Appeals. At the heart of her column likened incriminated that I, as the acting justice secretary then, "hastily" issued resolution which Monsod insisted to have reckoned as flimsy, if not baseless.

Monsod's assertion is inaccurate. A close reading of the resolution in question would readily show that they are exhaustively explained and strongly supported by law and existing jurisprudence. I wish to point out that the resolution finding probable cause to charge Gonzales was issued after I had deliberately weighed the facts, the law and documentary evidence submitted before me.

When I was called upon to review the resolution issued by the public prosecutor of Basilan, I became responsible merely for evaluating the incidents and deciding whether there existed sufficient grounds to engender a well-founded belief that a crime had been committed and that the respondents was probably guilty thereof.

In this case, there were two contending sides of the story as presented by both parties. While the victim's family had a witness, who is a surviving victim in the same incident and who executed a sworn statement pointing to the perpetration of the offense, the affidavits of Gonzales's witnesses showed that he could not have been physically present at the scene of the crime when it happened. Due to these completely contradictory statements, I realized that there was a need to conduct a full blown trial, as both allegations were all evidentiary in nature. As such, there was a need to let the circumstances before the trial court that has the authority and power to determine whether the accused committed the crime or not.

Finally, I have to reemphasize that the presumption of innocence as sanctioned by the Constitution is equally important as the right of a victim or the latter's family to seek justice.

—ALBERTO DEVANADERA,
solicitor general,
Office of the Solicitor General,
Legaspi Village, Makati City

Shepherds lost in quagmire of corruption

THIS IS A REACTION TO ARMANDO DAVID Macaraeg's commentary titled "Dear Shepherds and goodbye," (Inquirer, 3/26/08).

I enjoy reading her commentaries but I decided to react to this one. My thoughts on this because the Church's responsibility is to flock. I really laughed when I saw the "parable of the lost sheep" as shepherds in the Church indeed lost or totally clueless. I also agree that it's high time people learned their own moral opinions rather than wait for the Church to say something about social issues because we often hear what we don't want to hear.

I was in for a big disappointment that a pastoral letter took the place of a much-awaited homily during the Lenten season Mass. The pastoral letter eventually made me stand up and walk out of the church, never to return for the whole week. Instead of feeling "spiritual" during the Holy Week, I felt disgusted. The pastoral letter was read during the homily which only left a bitter taste in my mouth. I'd rather ponder on Christ at home than in a "Church" that can't focus on what's right anymore.

If it's a Hello-Goodbye stand the Church is taking—what's with their pastoral letter? If the Church hierarchy can't make up its mind on what is morally right and proper, it shouldn't issue pastoral letters implying that nothing should stop and that forgiveness is due those who have corrupted this country. Such pastoral letter is simply sickening, all the more so because it was read during Holy Week.

The reasons look to the bishops and priests to moral guidance and affirmation. But if we have a set of bishops who argue within themselves about what stand to make regarding the corrupt practices in government, what does that make of the entire Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines? There is an issue on what is the truth and what are lies. They made their stand—a pastoral letter for the Church, ignore and "drop" Lozada, tell people to stop going to rallies, and forgive those involved in massive corruption. That's tantamount to telling the people it's forgivable to steal, make large commissions, lie to the people who pay their salaries, live luxurious lifestyles and lifestyles, and that people should just shut up and let "the government" do its job.

The "government" is the problem! Those who sit in power and think they can get away with corruption. And the CBCP should have at least learned a lesson or two from the "Hello-Garci" mess that's what it said. So now, who takes the stand to move a proper roadmap to the government? Of course, people will take to the streets because that's the only place where people are heard; after all, the Church has already said "Hello-goodbye" to its flock.

I am really disappointed with the CBCP's recent acts of commission and omission. Does the P at the end of that acronym stand for it's late or the Philippines? Just wondering. Because it isn't the government getting crucified here, it's the entire nation.

—JOSETTE LOZADA,
josapicon@gmail.com

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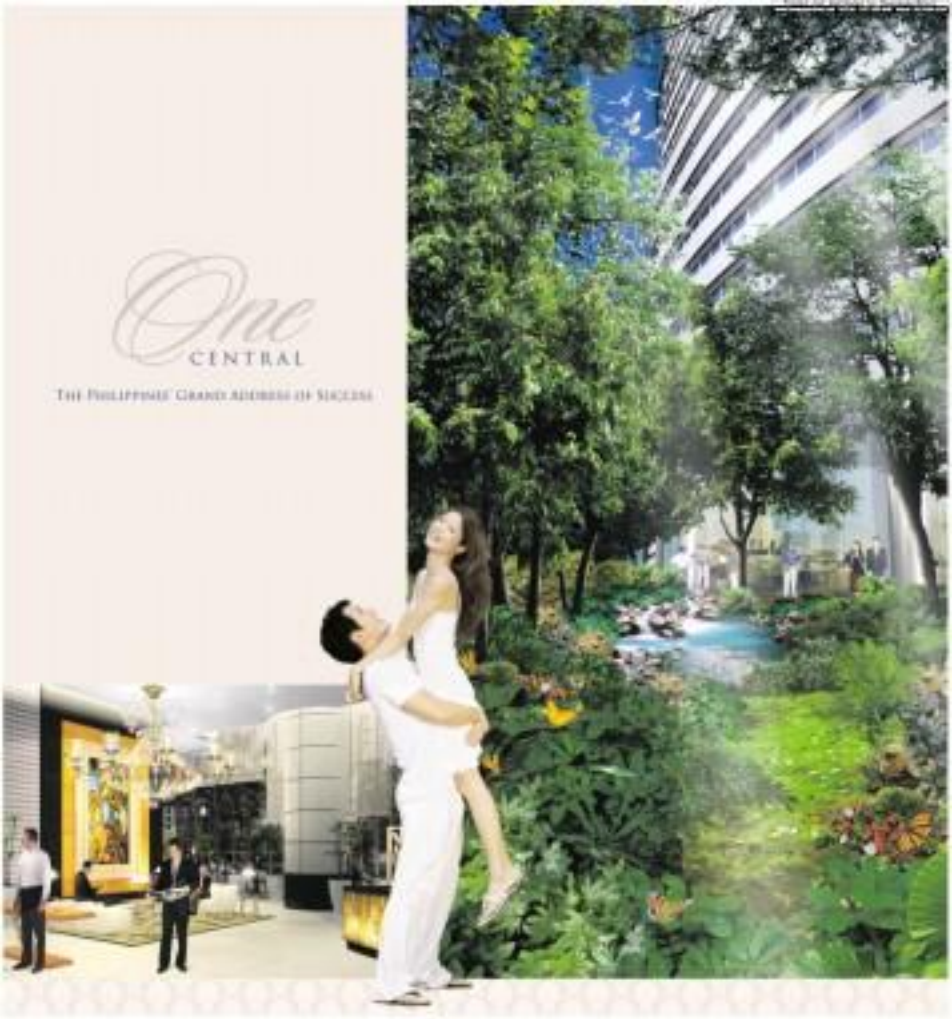

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Across the NATION

Cops cry coverup on death in resort

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—The provincial prosecutor of Palawan on Thursday asked the Department of Justice to issue a hold departure order against the manager of the exclusive Amanpulo resort after he was implicated in the suspected murder of a construction worker in January this year.

"We have asked Secretary Gonzalez to issue a hold departure order for Miguel Guidos de Rueda, principal candidate reports that he is leaving the country and because he has been implicated as an accessory to murder," Provincial Prosecutor Allen Rian Rodriguez told the Inquirer.

De Rueda, a Portuguese national, was named respondent and was ordered arrested in a murder and obstruction of justice case in connection with the death last Jan. 2 of a steel worker, Rolando Abanes, 43, at the barracked Amanpulo resort in Cuyo, Palawan.

Police suspect that Abanes may have been a victim of foul play and that the management of the resort may have had a hand in covering up the crime by bringing the body in Metro Manila and preempting the local police investigation.

The Cuyo police claimed De Rueda had ordered the transfer of the victim's body to Manila without coordinating with local police investigators and the municipal health official.

Eastern Police

Also implicated in the case was Eastern Police District Supt. Manuel Asuncion, who reportedly intervened in the investigation by facilitating an unauthorized post mortem examination of the victim's body after it was flown to Metro Manila from Pandacan funeral where Amanpulo is located.

Apart from De Sousa and Asuncion, also charged were engineer Ismil Corcuerra, engineer Simplicio Sandoval, Robert Hanchhen, Capt. Mike Sylara (company pilot), Chef de Leon, Jimmy Rodrigues and Cesar Padilla (resort's chief of security).

The management of Amanpulo has declined to issue an official statement on the case.

A person claiming to represent the resort, however, has sent several text messages to the Inquirer to say that the resort has nothing to do with the death of Abanes.

"Mr. De Sousa had nothing to do with the resurrection worker of Excel. Amanpulo has a construction contract with Excel. Excel is the employer of the dead construction worker who... had an accidental injuries noted," a certain Nancy said in the text message.

The Inquirer has asked Amanpulo management to issue an official statement on the case but received no reply.

Amanpulo, located in Pamalican Island off Cuyo, Palawan, is 380 km south of Manila in the Sulu Sea, is one of the country's most expensive and exclusive island resorts.

Hollywood stars like Michael Jackson, Diana Ross and Robert de Niro had been to the place.

Cuyo police

Senior Insp. Hermann Guerillano Saborido Jr., police chief of Cuyo, told in an interview with the Inquirer that reason officials had deliberately tried to prevent them from investigating the death of Abanes but did not elaborate.

A BREATHTAKING view of the sea from the shores of Amanpulo.

NEWSBRIEFS

■ BAGUIO CITY

Reporters climb Pulag

A GROUP of local journalists climbed Mt. Pulag, the Philippines' second highest mountain, to call for the protection of the environment and to drum up support for the campaign to end the killing and harassment of Filipino journalists.

At least 15 members and officers of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines Baguio-Benguet chapter called the climb, held on April 6 and 7, as a "symbolic" climb "to give human dignity, press freedom and environmental awareness."

"We will do anything to get the attention of the government to address the problem of killings of journalists [and members of] other sectors of the society. Reaching the peak of Mt. Pulag is our way of reaching the Arroyo administration that the killings have not to be 'business as usual,'" said writer Alfred Ace Lacsamana, general assembly organizer for the NUJP Baguio-Benguet.

Bonnie Calera, Inquirer Northern Luzon

■ TARLAC CITY

NPA rebs slain

TWO alleged members of the New People's Army were killed in an encounter with government troops in a Samal province on April 9.

The members of the Scout Platoon of the 424nd Infantry Battalion exchanged fire with a group of rebels allegedly belonging to the Samar South Front 6 for about 30 minutes in a chance encounter in sitio Ugbak in Barangay Villa Aurora, Bamy town, said Lt. Col. Jonathan Ponce, commanding officer of the 424nd IB.

The dead bodies of the rebels were brought to the village proper where villagers later identified them as "Ka Abel" and "Ka Jake," Ponce said.

Jerry R. Esplido, Inquirer Visayas

■ LUCENA CITY

2 Air Force men injured in clash

TWO Air Force soldiers were wounded in an encounter with the People's Army rebels in Mauban, Quezon on Saturday, April 12.

Army Maj. Randolph Cabangbang from the Armed Forces Southern Luzon Command in Camp Rafael said that at around 6 a.m. elements from the Air Force's 16th Combat Squadron engaged 15 NPA rebels in a heavy firefight which resulted to the wounding of two government soldiers.

The wounded, whose identities have not been immediately withheld, reportedly suffered critical injuries and were immediately airlifted to a military hospital in Quezon City.

Nelbe T. Muller Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ MARINDUQUE

Class 58 reunion

GRADUATES of Class 1958 of the Santa Cruz Institute will mark their golden jubilee on April 26 at the Sta. Cruz (SCI) Social Hall in Sta. Cruz, Marinduque.

Members of the class are asked to call Renato Garcia at 09181411925, Cesar Montano at 09053426384 or Lydia Rosencia at 09271-4978914 for details.

■ PALAU CITY

Board seeks gov't help for justice to slain OFW

THE DAVAO provincial board has asked concerned government agencies to help the family of the Capizeña killed in Japan to obtain justice for her death.

In a resolution passed April 10, the provincial board asked the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, the Department of Labor and Employment and the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration to provide assistance to the family of Ormianita Lopez Regero, who was slain in Japan last month.

Ormianita husband Manuel Regero reportedly admitted to the police that he killed his wife and 1-month-old son.

Felipe U. Celino, Inquirer Visayas

Raps vs mine firm found 'baseless, unfounded'

BA. ISABELLE.—A GENERAL team investigation team found no violation of environmental and natural resources laws by the mining firm Benguet Corp. (BC) in Sta. Cruz town as alleged by local officials and residents.

The team called "technical" complaints that BC broke the law in its operations. Dr. Ruben Tadiar, environment head of the provincial natural regulatory board, led the team that investigated the complaints.

"There was no sufficient evidence to warrant report of flaws committed by BC on its mining activities in the area, considering the fact that the firm has not started its actual mining operations," he said.

He said the team found another mining firm that was tagged by residents to have been operating in the area.

He added: the company's name pending the team's final report.

But Cruz Mayor Isidro Marly earlier asked Environment Secretary Jaime Antonio and Director General Andrea Rasco, Philippine National Police chief, to look into reports that the BC was destroying the environment in its exploration activities.

But BC Vice President Reynaldo Mendoza denied the accusations, saying it has yet to start production as it is still securing some permits.

Mendoza said the BC holds a mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA) over some 1,400 hectares of lands in Barangay Gamgam for nickel exploration.

He said the firm conducted mineral exploration, such as drilling and test pits, but it has complied with mining laws and environmental regulations.

The company is proceeding cautiously to avoid violating rules, he said, adding that other groups with adverse mining interests in the province are "closely watching our moves." He did not elaborate.

A team from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau regional office investigated the alleged environmental damage complaints filed by a Rogelio Merced, village chief of Lusiad, a neighboring barangay of Gamgam. Cesar Ulbu, Inquirer Central Luzon

INQUIRER Visaya

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Activists' kin cling to dimmest hopes

By Nestor Pilapil Jr.
Iloilo City

WHEN SHE FAILED TO pass the bar exams last year, May Wen Demirada was not surprised. The day after she left Iloilo for Manila to attend review classes, her hopes of becoming a lawyer had already been shelved on April 12, 2007.

A day before, she had hugged and bid goodbye to her mother Ma. Luisa Pura-Bonnaude at the Iloilo port. That was the last time she saw her.

Hourly armed men abducted her mother and fellow activist Nilo Aradis in Barangay Calumbaran in Oton town, 7 kilometers south of Iloilo City. They stopped the sedans' vehicle, shot and seriously wounded human rights worker Jose Bly Gonzales and left him for dead.

Bonnaude, a prominent political activist during the Marcos dictatorship, was the spokesperson of the Sumilao sa Mga Ba-Dimonium Lahos sa Dimonyo at anak sa sinsenyo (Sibak) in Pavia, while Aradis was the chair of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan in Pavia.

Gonzales survived, but his companions have remained missing. Their vehicle was burned in a sugarcane field in Antique town, 50 km away.

May Wen rushed back to Iloilo City on April 13 after cancelling her enrollment for the review classes and went down into the agonizing campaign to look for her mother and friends. But she still decided to take the bar exams despite limited time for review in the extended court hearings, following up tips and leads, and joining campaigns.

Burden getting heavy

A year after, she is clinging to the dimmest hope that her mother is still alive. "The burden gets heavier and heavier as the days go by. But we should never give up hope, especially at times when it is most encouraging," she said.

The victims' families and colleagues have blamed military agents for the abductions, but military officials have repeatedly denied the allegations.

May Wen and friends with Bonnaude have filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus against police and military officials. The case, however, was dismissed last year because no serious and physical evidence could prove that the respondents were involved.

She was subsequently filed a petition for a writ of amparo before the Iloilo Regional Trial Court against President Macapagal-Arroyo and nine police and military officials. All respondents have exhausted their regular denials of involvement in the abductions and citing that they had been exerting efforts to find the victims.

The Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) has filed a motion to dismiss the petition and to drop the President among the respondents, citing her immunity from civil or criminal cases during her incumbency. It said the petitioners failed to prove their accusation and cited the security risks of allowing access to certain places without authorized grounds.

Omnibus ruling

Government lawyers have also said the petition is "frivolous" and linked to fellow petitioners.

Presiding Judge Nestor Aguilar of RTC Branch 33 is set to issue an omnibus ruling on the petition.

"I sometimes fear that if Nonoy is still alive, our efforts could push her captors to make things harder for him," May Wen said.

On top of her efforts to look for her mother and keep her online job, May Wen is taking care of her 13-year old sister Tamara. Her father, Tomas, has not returned after he was tagged by the military as a rebel leader.

"I feel like I've aged so many years," said May Wen, who will turn 26 on May 1.

Tamara said she missed her mother so much. "I cannot count how many times I've hoped, dreamt and wished on stars that my mom just came home on this day last year only she's absent, and maybe bringing along a bag of food to me," she said in a monotone.

But she has kept words for the abductors. "[To] whoever did this to my mom and The Umadoy and all the members whom who have suffered the same fate, you should be ashamed of what you're doing," she said.

Bonnaude said she was continuously fighting depression by walking nowhere in the thought that her husband lived and fought for a noble cause. "The hardest part is not knowing whether he is still alive or not. When should I stop waiting for him? When should I stop looking out of our window for him?" she said.

But the loss has been hardest on their 7-year-old son, Daniel Manibal or Dibi. Since the abduction, Dibi has refused Joan Clark homecomings of Dumaguete and go to Iloilo City. He has refused to say why, but Bonnaude believes that her son is afraid that he will also be abducted.

May Pitos and Bonnaude said they would never give up looking for their loved ones even if it will take years.

"If they are still alive, they would also hope that we won't give up," said May Wen. She had brought her search for clues and leads to cyberspace by posting photos of her mother and accounts of the abduction, along with contact information of the "Save Luisa and Nilo Bienvenue (SLNB)" in her friendster account.

The SLNB has also put up a website and online petition site in the hope of pressuring those who have taken the two to release them unharmed and for authorities to solve their abduction. The website (www.savelnbaradis.ph) don't seem to gain international attention due to flash-outs and flow-of other victims of forced disappearances.

As of April 10, the online petition has gathered 1,390 signatories from the Philippines, US, Germany, Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, China, Belgium, United Arab Emirates and France.

May Pitos said she had found strength in the families of other victims, like Edita Burgos, mother of missing activist Jonas Burgos. "But I feel worse when I see other people experiencing the same pain that my family is undergoing," she said.

Last month, May Wen, along with other human rights advocates, brought the cases of her mother, Aradis and other abducted activists to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva. The UNHRC has assured to conduct its Universal Period Review of the human rights situation in 61 countries, including the Philippines.

"We hope that this will put pressure on [the government] to produce Nonoy and Nilo Aris," said May Pitos.

But life must go on for the victims' families while they continue to look for their loved ones. May Wen said she would attend review classes and take the bar exams next year and help in cases of human rights violations.

Bonnaude said she would be busy serving as chairperson councilor in Dumaguete.

Today, May Wen and Bonnaude will be joining activists and friends of the victims in a procession from Molo Church to the site of the abduction, a rally at the Iloilo capitol grounds, and a protest march on the city's main streets. "We are doing anything possible to find them because we have nothing to lose now," May Bonnaude said.

MAY WEN Demirada (second from right) threatens her mother's case with members of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva last month.

CONTINUED ON A16

MARIA LUISA Pura-Bonnaude

More Sports stories on A21 to 24

Late SPORTS

Phone Pals deal Barako first loss

By Jose Navarro

COACH YENG GUIAO WAS RIGHT about the consistency and unwavering presence of Asiano Pareda. It was his lefty who put him down last night.

Talk N Text put up a collective stance to overcome another sophomore performance by friends and individual Red Bull, 103-92, in the Asean PBA Phone Conference at the Araneta Coliseum.

With Asiano Mylltoss Forced to ride the bench due to a pair of unnecessary fouls, the Phone Pals leaned on Don Allado and Mac Cardoza on the firing end while slumping down on the rest of the Barako.

Allado and Cardoza combined for 48 points as the Phone Pals took control in the second quarter before turning back reverend Red Bull comebacks.

"It's a blessing in disguise," said Talk N Text coach Chot Reyes, referring to the early bad results of Meghee. "It forced the locals to get the job done."

In contrast, the Barako relied heavily on the seven-foot Pareda, who again produced a double-double of 24 points and 13 rebounds on top of two steals, two blocks and an assist in an all-out no-relief performance.

"We knew that we have no match for Pareda's size. The solution was to use quickness and 3 point touchscreen (defense)," he said, Reyes.

The only bright spot for the Bulls was Fitch shown as the high-leaping former Ateneo Eagle contributed 19 points.

The Phone Pals shot their victims at 2-1 to draw Ginebra with Alaska Purefoods.

"It's all about toughness and experience," said Reyes, who figured in a shooting match with the 6-foot-9 Meghee on the bench.

Meanwhile, Ma. Lucia Bonilla shoots for a third straight victory while Hotmen guy Glardeo tries to crash the winner's circle when they collide today at the Tacloban Convention Center in Tacloban City.

The Brothers contacts eight favorites over the Gin Kings, who will be passalling a new 7-foot import in Tracy Hawes, who had brief stints with the Miami Heat and the Boston Celtics in the NBA.

The scores

Talk N Text (103)—Allado 25, Cardoza 19, Ildefonso 10, Montagnes 10, Dimaio 9, Reyes 8, Cruz 5, Dale 4, De Ocampo 4, Ong 2, Arevalo 0, Lao 0.

Red Bull (92)—Pareda 24, Alcoser 19, Espiritu 12, Robinson 10, Bolado 8, Pascual 8, Agustin 5, Cruz 4, Nuñez 3, Manuel 0, Arbasa 0, Valenzuela 0.

Quarters: 22-18, 61-51, 79-62, 103-92

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Aplus METRO
Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

Man holds hostage nephews, nieces

Suspect surrenders after hour-long negotiations with policemen

By Julie M. Aurelio

A 38-YEAR-OLD MAN TOOK HOSTAGE early yesterday morning in Parañaque City members of his family—three nieces and two nephews—who reportedly made a mess of his personal belongings.

Antonio Tom Godinez, who was armed with two 12-inch kitchen knives, surrendered to authorities after an hour of negotiations with policemen.

Supt. Ronald Estilles, chief of police, said they were preparing charges of illegal detention, grave threats, and illegal possession of bladed weapons against Godinez should the victims' relatives decide to file a formal complaint.

"This guy was in drug rehabilitation some time ago. It was fortunate he did not fight back...," said Estilles.

The suspect, reportedly the son of a Vietnamese mother and Spanish-Filipino father, reportedly had a drug abuse problem and had undergone rehabilitation at the Bitoy Foundation in Cavite province.

The five victims—Maxile Belen, 12; Mitzie, 9; Andrea, 4; Mico, 9; and Cyril, 5, all surnamed Godinez—were ordered released.

An initial investigation showed that at around 7 a.m. yesterday, Godinez got fed up with the children's habit of going to his room at #329 San Bernardo St., San Antonio Valley 1 in Brgy. San Antonio.

"The suspect claimed the children often entered his room and made a mess of his personal belongings. Sometimes no data. (They were taking advantage of him.) He wouldn't help in any longer and finally lost his patience," Estilles told the bayan in a phone interview yesterday.

Godinez allegedly got two 12-inch kitchen knives and landed the five victims, threatening to hurt them.

One of the children, Mitzi, was able to escape and sought the neighbors' help. The neighbors then called the Dembanque City police.

Responding policemen led by Estilles, Supt. Carlos Tolentino and members of the police community precinct 4 on Sucat Road talked the angry suspect into releasing the children.

"He asked to talk to a certain Bert, a friend. When Bert came, the policemen entered the house," Estilles added.

Godinez did not resist. He is now in the custody of the Dembanque City police. "The children will undergo psychiatric counseling," Estilles said.

FUNS FOUSH
Runners of the multi-sport-fest Dragon coach have their stylish Manila Bay as part of their preparations for the day-long Earth Day celebration on April 22 (named the Colour of Green in Filipino) in Pasay City.

Buses plying Edsa furnished with microchips by April 21

By DJ Yap

ALL BUSES PLYING EDSA WILL be equipped with microchips by the time the Organized Bus Route System begins on April 21.

"We expect that microchips will be installed on all the buses by the 18th to be fully operational on April 21," said Metropolitan Manila Development Authority general manager Robert Nazareno.

He said the use of the so-called e-, or radio frequency identification technology (RFID) tags, would be starting in the east bus area.

In a phone interview, Nazareno said 3,000 of Edsa buses had so far been equipped with the RFID tags that would be used to track their location and identify colorful buses, or those without a franchise.

The ORB is intended to relieve traffic on Edsa by systematizing the dispatch of buses using RFID tags and surveillance cameras.

Buses shall line up on a "first in, first out" basis at MMDA-established terminals.

Since last week, the MMDA has impounded close to 200 colorum buses in preparation for the scheme.

As a result, average travel speed along Edsa dramatically improved from 23.25 kilometers per hour to 40.65 kph, the MMDA said.

Nazareno said the agency would continue the clearing operation, but he added more colorum buses stopped plying the Edsa route, particularly in the day time, since the crackdown began.

He said they had people monitoring buses at night time as some colorum vehicles were out in the evening.

Mauling case vs Borgy Manotoc dropped

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE LAWYER OF BORGY MANOTOC hopes his client will be able to clear his name with the dismissing of the mauling case against the commercial and model.

Abraham Espejo said Manotoc, grandson of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos and son of former congresswoman Imee Marcos, was "certainly accused of being violent."

On Thursday, assistant prosecutor Ricardo Bimbo dismissed the serious physical injuries case filed against Manotoc by Carlo Bruno, grandson of former social welfare secretary Mina Parilla de Taruma.

In a phone interview, Espejo said his client was very happy that the mauling charges were dismissed one year ago after the incident at the The Fort in Taguig City.

Bruno's lawyer Jeremias Ramirez said they would file an appeal asking Bimbo to reconsider his decision. Ramirez said Bruno's testimony against the accused was strong.

In a four-page resolution, Bimbo dismissed the charges after finding out the testimony failed to show that there was enough witnesses and evidence to prove that Manotoc beat him up outside the Embassy Bar on April 15, 2007.

Bruno charged Manotoc, Ronald Pantoja, and seven others of beating him up after the complainant went to talk to Manotoc's girlfriend Ortanez Galman. The victim had several cuts on his hands and head and was confined at the Makati Medical Center.

But Estrada said the medical certificate and the victim's testimony failed to show that Bruno was beaten up by Manotoc.

"The medical certificate should have shown that hematoma or contusions were inflicted on him, on his face and different parts of the body. However, none appears," part of the resolution read.

Nograles' reply to criticisms on jailed newsman

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

FOR SEEMING, RIDDLE HOW, this column has been burdening Speaker Prospero "Boy" Nograles for sending to jail Alex Adonis, a former radio commentator in Davao City who maintained that he an alleged "sexopaths."

Adonis is serving time at the Davao Penal Colony on accusation of libel.

Boy Nograles sees as a small grating his side on why Adonis was sent to prison.

In the interest of fair play, the following are the highlights of Nograles' reply to my criticisms:

Dear Ramon,

I would like to state that I am not an enemy of journalism. I have never been and I will never be. But like you, I also feel pain, not just for me but also for my family when people denigrate my person and my reputation which is a human instinct to defend oneself from the harm perpetrated by lies in accordance with our laws. For this reason, I filed a libel case against Alex Adonis and a number of other media men who published/ aired/aired scurrilous abuse on me.

I have withdrawn all the libel cases I filed against the others although he has stated that regardless public apology and after they collected public libel, they did not have a single hair to their name, Alex Adonis, from which Adonis picked up his story, published a public apology in its May 27, 2006 issue, admitting that its article fell victim to disinformation.

And JP Adonis done the same. I would have also with-

drawn the libel case against him. After all, even the publication which he used as basis to accuse me in his radio program, Chad's already admitted committing a mistake by publishing a fabricated article. But he was not human enough to accept his mistake.

Moreover, it was Adonis' negligence and disregard of our legal processes that put him in jail. When the case was finally filed in court, he jumped bail and never attended the hearings. In fact, he remained a fugitive until the promulgation of the decision in the case where he was found guilty beyond reasonable doubt. The trial judge who handled his case could have not decided otherwise because he never presented any defense to refute the libel that his malicious attacks against me were fabricated.

My proposal to decriminalize libel was one of the issues I learned from Adonis' case. I filed this bill (House Bill No. 20923) precisely to strike a balance between press freedom and responsible journalism. If this bill will be enacted into law, I will be the first to sell for Adonis' release.

Respectfully,
Prospero C. Nograles
Speaker
House of Representatives

METROBRIEFS

Mandaluyong veterans get aid

IN RECOGNITION of the bravery of Mandaluyong City local veterans, the city has gifted them and their heirs P75,000 in cash and apartments a mortuary assistance package. Mandaluyong City Mayor Benhur Abalos announced the award during the Araw ng Kagitingan (Day of Valor) rites on Wednesday. The financial package was made possible by a city council ordinance approved last month. "This is our own way of showing the real veterans how grateful we are for the bravery they have shown in the darkest times of our history. There is no better time than now to give them the benefits that they truly deserve," said Abalos. "While we acknowledge those who have risked their lives in the name of freedom of our country from foreign oppressors, it is only equally fitting to honor the living war veterans," the mayor added. Those entitled to receive the benefits include active-duty local veterans during the Spanish regime, those recognized by the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office and accredited active-duty members of the Veterans Chapter of Mandaluyong City and their beneficiaries. Apart from the financial assistance, legitimate heirs of the veterans will also be given priority in the city government's education and medical services.

Eloisa L. Silva

Makati takes down BF posters

MAKATI City is thinking of suing the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority for putting up tarpaulin posters of its chief, Bayani Fernando, on billboards that it owns along Epifanio de los Santos Ave. (EDSA). The city's environment services chief, Benito Villar, said MMDA officials could be liable for violating the Makati Solid Waste Management Code prohibiting the defacement of walls and public spaces. He said the MMDA may also have violated an ordinance that considers illegal campaigns as obstructions, and violators may be slapped with fines. Villar said the MMDA officials could be liable for violating the Makati Solid Waste Management Code prohibiting the defacement of walls and public spaces. He said the MMDA may also have violated an ordinance that considers illegal campaigns as obstructions, and violators may be slapped with fines. "If an elected public official like Fernando finds they are people in government should set the example," Villar said in a statement issued by the city's public affairs office. On Thursday, Villar department inspected 20 of the "offending" posters. Fernando's deputy chief of staff, Jonathan Miro, said the MMDA officials would

Obama loses 10-point advantage over McCain

WASHINGTON—REPUBLICAN JOHN McCain tried to bolster his economic credentials as a new poll showed he had erased Barack Obama's 10-point advantage in a head-to-head presidential matchup, leaving him essentially tied with both Democratic candidates.

In a further boost to McCain, many supporters of Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton are so strongly divided that they may shift their support to the other if their candidate does not get the Democratic nomination, according to the nationwide Pew-Ipsos poll released Thursday.

The Republican nominee-in-waiting sought Thursday to build off criticism that he has been indifferent to the US economy's woes and the worst economy by outlining a plan to help homeowners who cannot pay their mortgages.

The veteran senator said he would help 200,000 to 400,000 homeowners trade their existing mortgages for more affordable loans at a speech in New York City's Brooklyn borough. Aides said the plan could cost from $3 billion to $10 billion (euro2 billion to euro6 billion).

Between the two Democrats, the poll numbers were unchanged from February with Obama at 46 percent and Clinton at 45 percent.

However, the internal and extended Democratic primary race has turned off some Democrats. About a quarter of Obama supporters say they will vote for McCain or if Clinton is their Democratic nominee. About a third of Clinton supporters say they would vote for McCain if it is Obama.

Obama holds a lead in the race for delegates, and Clinton is hoping to reverse her campaign with a win in the last major primary on April 22 in Pennsylvania, though it is doubtful she will catch up. Neither candidate will be able to clinch the 2,025 delegates needed to win the nomination without the approval of superdelegates, choices of elected and party insiders who can vote as the party's dogged conventions.

McCain is benefiting from a bounce in the polls since he essentially clinched the Republican nomination a month ago. The former Vietnam prisoner of war has slowly moved up in matchups with each of the Democratic candidates, particularly Obama.

An AP-Ipsos poll taken in late February had Obama leading McCain 51-41 percent. The current survey, conducted April 7-9, had them at 49 percent each.

Clinton led McCain, 48-43, previously in February. The latest survey showed the New York senator with 44 percent support to McCain's 45 percent. Further, in the poll's analysis of voters' 3-1 percentage points, Clinton and McCain are statistically tied.

Against McCain, Obama has gained among women—from 37 percent in February to 47 percent in April. He also lost nine points or more among voters under 45, high-income households, whites, Catholics, independents, homebuyers, people living in the Northeast and those with a high school education or less. AP

MCCAIN, on a campaign charter flight. AP

Huge deposit of oil may lie beneath US northern plains

AN AREA OF SHALE ARE OTHER ROCK IN North Dakota and Montana is estimated to hold the largest potential oil resources in the 48 contiguous states, according to an assessment released on Thursday by the US Geological Survey.

The new, known as the Bakken Formation, might contain 3 billion to 4.3 billion barrels of oil that could be extracted using current technology, the survey said.

The United States had not released 22 billion barrels of proven oil reserves in 2006, according to the Energy Department. The new assessment by the Geological Survey could raise those reserves once drilling starts.

The survey numbers is what oil companies who have flocked to the region already know: A boom is afoot. But geologists and industry officials alike cautioned that the numbers were simply an estimate, easily skewed higher or lower by technological advances or economic changes. If the price of oil drops, companies will not be willing to spend as much to extract it, said the Bakken Formation, which also extends into Canada, requires an expensive technique called horizontal drilling.

"Just because a study says this amount is potentially recoverable doesn't mean that that is what we're going to recover," said Ron Ness, president of the North Dakota Petroleum Council. "If the technology might change, and we recover more or less, or even recover might change, and we recover more or less."

The new estimate covers undiscovered, technically recoverable oil resources, which is distinct to those "producible using currently available technology and industry practices." That definition is one notch below the "proved reserves" category.

The survey reveals a 25-fold increase from the last US Geological Survey assessment of the Bakken Formation in 1995, which estimated that 151 million barrels could be extracted. Richard M. Roberts, a research geologist with the agency who led the assessment, attributed the change to advances in drilling technology and an improved understanding of the formation's geology.

The Bakken Formation is the largest oil resource ever assessed by the agency in which the oil is dispersed throughout the rock instead of resting in separate pools. Sources are "continuous" oil accumulations, the type of distribution makes the oil harder and more expensive to extract.

Pollocks estimates that it would take tens of thousands of wells to extract the oil. AFP

NEPALIS line up to vote at a polling station near a temple on April 10, in Patan, Nepal. AP

Nepal celebrates peaceful election as results trickle in

KATHMANDU—NEPAL FRIDAY CELEBRATED a surprisingly peaceful vote on its political future as results began trickling in from the landmark polls contested by former Maoist rebels and mainstream parties.

The vote on Thursday was a key point of the peace deal which Kingdom's Maoist power deal with the Maoists, and will lead to the formation of an assembly that will rewrite the constitution and is likely to abolish an unpopular monarchy.

Despite fears that polling day would witness an explosion of violence, only sporadic incidents of violence and a relatively calm morning from a decade of civil war which left 13,000 dead.

United Nations chief Ban Ki-moon congratulated Nepal on the vote, which he said "took place in a generally orderly and peaceful atmosphere."

"Nepal once was M. Hell," read a banner headline in the English-language daily The Kathmandu Post, trumpeting the smooth running of the high-stakes polls.

"The Nepali people have once more proved doomsayers wrong," crowed the Nepali Times.

In spite of strikes, shootings and bombings in the weeks leading up to the polls, just 23 of around 21,000 polling booths had to be shut, the Election Commission said.

Instantly had been light on on the country's east coast isolated flare-ups, including three deaths in the ethnically tense south, were reported—no worse than on any other day.

If the count goes smoothly, the results for more than a third of the seats, those allocated by the constituency system, were expected in late next week, the Election Commission said.

"Results have already started trickling in. There are some areas where the ballot boxes are still coming and it may take some time due to remote geographical conditions," spokesman Laxman Bhattarai said.

The remainder of the seats, allocated by proportional representation, will take longer to decide as the count will be more complex. The complete results are not expected for several weeks.

Kathmandu's City Hall countdown—in the only seat to use electronic voting machines—sets the first to declare results, with the seat going to the centrist Nepali Congress led by Minister Prime Ministers Girija Prasad Koirala.

When the full results emerge over the coming weeks, Nepal will have a new 601-seat assembly that will tear up the country's past status as a Hindu monarchy and write a new constitution from scratch.

The Maoists, whose 2006 peace deal ended the bloody civil war and the king's attempt to seize absolute power, held 54 seats in the 330-seat caretaker assembly and control five ministries without even fighting an election. AFP

Men scouted targets for British 7/7 bombings, court told

LONDON—THREE MEN CHARGED IN connection with the July 7, 2005 London suicide bombings went on trial on Thursday, accused of scouting for potential targets in the capital.

Mohammed Shakil, 31, Sadeer Saleem, 27 and Waheed Ali, 24, were friends with the bombers and shared common beliefs, Kingston Crown Court in southwest London was told.

The bombers, Mohammed Sidique Khan, Shehzad Tanweer, Jermaine Lindsay and Hasib Hussain killed 52 people and wounded hundreds in coordinated suicide attacks on three underground trains and a bus.

During a reconnaissance weekend seven months before the bombings, one of the accused visited the London Eye, the Natural History Museum and the London Aquarium, prosecutors alleged.

They said various types of evidence would help explain the group's activities including contacts with people convicted of terrorist activity, travelling to Pakistan and possessing radical ideological material.

The court heard the accused had extensive contact with the bombers, which had been uncovered through mobile records, fingerprints on documents, family videos and surveillance.

Prosecutors say the bombers recorded a video for the group daughter whose belief or a previous mission expecting to die, prosecutors said.

"Nevertheless, not long to go now. And I'm going to really really miss you a lot," Khan says to the camera while holding the baby girl.

Khan then goes on to introduce his daughter's "cracks"—two of the bombers and to the defendant Waheed Ali.

Prosecutors say Khan expected to die while fighting jihad in Afghanistan, but later changed his mind and opted to attack London.

Prosecutors say that between Nov. 17, 2004 and July 8, 2005, Shakil, Saleem and Ali "unlawfully and maliciously" conspired with the four bombers and others unknown to cause explosions likely to endanger life or cause serious harm and injury.

The group, all from Beeston, Leeds, over the single charge under the Explosive Substances Act 1883.

Dressed casually in open necked shirts, they sat in the dock, listening with some concern.

Prosecutor Nick Hewitt told the jury the group had developed violent thoughts against Britain. Reuters

PROTEST VS CLAMPDOWN Tenzin Dorjee Tsewang, 23, along with 4 Free Tibet activists and supporters had their hands sealed to front of the Roundhouse on April 10 in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in protest of China's occupation and human rights violations of Tibet. AP

LatAm girls find a violent form of family in gangs

By Marc Lacey

GUATEMALA CITY—"IO JOHO ONE OF GUATEMALA'S FIERCE street gangs, Bonita, a tiny young woman with barrel muscles and tattoos running up and down her arms, had to have sex with a dozen or so of her homeboys one night. She needs nothing unconvincible when the her young men climbed off her and prepared to go all over again. Her grandma her or becoming a full-fledged member of the Mara Salvatrucha.

The gang leader ordered Bonita, then 14, to sell drugs, grab chains off people's necks and even hit a girl from a rival gang. She did as told, complied, although Bonita said she was not completely clear if she could lead or disobey the leader she lived in fear back.

"I thought it would be like my family," Bonita, now 23, said of her reasons for joining the gang. "I thought I'd get the love I was missing. But they'd let me. They ordered me around. They told me I could do with me or kill someone, and I did it."

"When she tried to leave the gang, her fellow gang members shot her six times. She was still visible on her body, much for her many as do—scars evidence who visited her during the nine months she spent in a hospital.

The street gangs of Central America, which have spun a web of violence through Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and even the United States, are estimated to have as many as 100,000 members.

And new evidence suggests that girls like Bonita, more 15 or younger, may make up a larger share of Central America's street gangs' ranks than previously suspected.

"There's a lot more recruiting and girls from intense pressure," said Dora Maria Tellez, the Sandinista ambassador to Guatemala.

Her government recently helped finance a study that found that women might account for as much as 40 percent of the region's gang membership. Other gang experts put the percentage lower.

It is clear in their home lives that often pre-teen girls are the gangs in the first place.

"If a girl is getting abused by her father, the gang will step in and end it," said Juanita Calderon, a prominent former gang member who now works for Guatemala's government trying to lure gang members into law-abiding lives.

If the girls do not follow the directives of the leader, Cifuentes acknowledged, a beating or even worse will follow the result. NYT

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following project:

Name of Project (Brief Description)	One (1) lot supply of indoor trees, transplanted, maintenance and replacement including installation, care and cleaning for the perennial plantations and other related services for the BSP Main Complex and Security Printing Complex, San Andres, Manila, Head Complex and BSP Tower at Bangkerohan
Approved Budget for the Contract	Php2,340,113.00 per annum
Contract Duration	Two (2) years

Prospective bidders should have undertaken at least three (3) similar engagements executed and completed from CY2005 to present with an aggregate amount of at least fifty percent (50%) of the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC). Similar engagements are engagements in at least fifty or the ABC. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall also use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement are Supporting Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding, Contemporaneous, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the guidelines enumerated in R.A. No. 9184 and its implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is stated as follows:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	Starting 14 April 2008, up to 1:00 P.M. only
2. Pre-Bid Conference	21 April 2008, 10:30 A.M.
3. Deadline of Submission of Bids	28 May 2008, 10:00 A.M.
4. Bid Evaluation	Three (3) days to accomplish with the assistance of the Technical Working Group
5. Post-Qualification	Seven (7) days to accomplish with the assistance of the Technical Working Group
6. Notice of Award	Within 15 days from the completion of post-qualification, but not later than 30 days from the opening of bids

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php5,000.00 in the BAC Office.

The BSP reserves its unqualified right to reject any and all bids, waive any defect therein, accept the bid it considers most advantageous to the government, and to annul the bidding process, without incurring any liability to the affected bidder/s.

For BSP: Insert any right to reject any and all bid documents, or waive any defect in the bidding, if there is any, and accept the bid it considers most advantageous to the government, and to annul the bidding process, without incurring any liability to the affected bidder/s.

(Sgd.) JOSE DE JESUS, JR.
Chairman

BSP-April 12, 2008

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Quncio

Bush suspends US troop cuts in Iraq

WASHINGTON—US PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush on Thursday ordered an indefinite halt to US troop withdrawals from Iraq come July, warning that the strife-torn country remains too fragile five years after Baghdad fell.

"Violent and complex challenges remain in Iraq, from the presence of al Qaida in the destructive influence of Iran to hard compromises needed for further political progress," Bush said in a speech defending his strategy.

With his fellow Republicans worried about the costly unpopular conflict's cost in November elections, Bush said he was also shortening troop deployments, and promised that "while this war is difficult, it is not endless."

Still, the president's remarks underlined that his successor in January 2009 will decide whether and how to end the war, which is now in its sixth year, after slimming the force of more than 6,000 US troops and executive fangs.

US Defense Secretary Robert Gates said that, while he expected more drawdowns if the situation improves, he did not think that US force levels could drop to 100,000 by year's end as he had once hoped.

In his speech, Bush explained that he was accepting advice from the top US commander in Iraq, Army Gen. David Petraeus, and the US ambassador in Baghdad, Ryan Crocker, who testified to US lawmakers for two days this week.

"I've accepted their recommendations," he said, underlining the caution-as-of pursuing a limited drawdown from 20 brigades of combat troops to 15 brigades as scheduled by the end of July, but freezing further withdrawals.

"Beyond that, General Petraeus says he'll need time to consolidate his forces and assess how this reduced American presence will affect conditions on the ground before making increased recommendations on further reductions," he said.

"And I've told him he'll have all the time he needs," the president said, without setting a timeframe.

The White House said it would last 45 days, and Gates told the Senate Armed Services Committee it would be a "fatal pause for consolidation and evaluation."

"I do not anticipate this period of review to be an extended one, and I would emphasize that the hope, depending on conditions on the ground, is to reduce our presence further this fall," he said.

During meetings from top military commanders that the "next to putting a heavy strain on US forces and their families. Bush also said he was cutting times of duty for troops deployed after Aug. 1, from 15 months to one year.

"We'll also ensure that our Army units will have at least a year home for every year in the field," he said.

Democrats, including White House hopefuls Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, have stepped up calls to bring more US troops home, and said Bush's only strategy is to hand off the conflict to his successor. AFP

WARNING FROM SCIENTISTS

Warmer seas, over-fishing spell disaster for oceans, food

PARIS—THE FUTURE FOOD SECURITY of millions of people is at risk because over-fishing, climate change and pollution are killing marine life in the world's oceans, warned scientists meeting this week.

The two-thirds of the planet covered by seas provide one-fifth of the world's protein—but 75 percent of fish stocks are now fully exploited or depleted, a Unesco conference that ended Friday was told.

Warming seas are flooding coral, fouling algal blooms and changing ocean currents that impact fish numbers, said rising sea levels could in future threaten coastal areas from Bangladesh to New York, experts said.

"People think the ocean is a place apart," said Peter Heill, head of the World Ocean Observatory. "In fact it's the thing that connects us—through trade, transportation, natural systems, weather patterns and everything we depend on for survival."

Marine ecosystems and food security were key concerns at the Global Conference on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands, an intergovernmental meeting of hundreds of experts from governments, environmental groups and universities.

"There is a race to fish, but in solid captain fisheries eight stocks are cap catch no more," said Serena Maranzoli, fisheries chief science advisor at the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

"We catch 100 million metric tons per year, and that's been very flat globally. Our only hope is if we conserve and rebuild stocks," he said, adding that sustainable aquaculture could help make up the shortfall.

The current plunder is robbing long-term sustainability with "too many fishing boats taking too many fish and not allowing the stocks to regenerate," said Vance McElhany of Conservation International.

"Once the oceans are gone, we're gone. The oceans cushion the planet."

The world has already seen the effects of over-fishing, experts said.

North Atlantic cod fisheries collapsed in the 1990s, and seven previously disappeared off Chile, having left Iceland and residents off California.

Sixty-four percent of ocean areas fall outside national jurisdictions, making it difficult to reach international consensus as to stop illegal fishing—a growing concern in high-tech ships across the high seas.

"It's the Wild West. It's a very small number of boats but the technology allows them to take enormous amounts of fish," said Heill.

"They take only the high commercial product and they throw the bycatch overboard. The waste is extraordinary."

Marine life is also being harmed by climate change, said Maranzoli. AFP

PALESTINIANS dance during the "Lavlaza" festival in the West Bank village of Ar'ra, near Bethlehem, on April 10. AFP

Israel sends tanks, 'dozers to Gaza

GAZA CITY—ISRAELI TANKS AND BULLdozers entered into the Gaza Strip on Friday after the Israeli army warned it would retaliate against Hamas for a deadly explosion of violence earlier this week.

Ten tanks and two armored bulldozers entered one kilometer into Gaza, west of the Jhaveh refugee camp, drawing heavy fire from Palestinian militants, Palestinian security sources said.

An Israeli army spokesperson confirmed Israeli army operating in Gaza and had come under gun and mortar fire.

Hours earlier two Hamas militants were killed in an Israeli air strike in southern Gaza.

Israel has vowed to "settle the score" with the Islamist group for a bomber attack that killed two Israeli civilians on Wednesday, and a barrage of a month of missiles strike in and around Gaza.

While Hamas has not claimed responsibility for that attack, which three other groups said they carried out, Israel says the Islamist group is in Hamas because it controls Gaza, where it caused forces loyal to moderate president Mahmud Abbas to flee.

"Hamas today runs the Gaza Strip, and this organization and all its members bear responsibility for the incessant terror and it will have to bear the inevitable price for its actions," Prime Minister Ehud Olmert told a rally outs Tel Aviv late Thursday.

"I promise you that the response against Hamas will be such that Hamas will be no longer able to act against Israeli citizens," he said.

Hamas said such statements clearly showed that Israel was preparing the ground for a new military operation against Gaza.

Israel militants on Wednesday breached the border with Israel under cover of mortar fire, killing two Israeli contractors at the Nahal Oz oil terminal, that provides the Palestinian territory with its fuel supplies.

Israel has retaliation side, Israel civilians and three fighters were killed during and hours shortly after the attack.

Israel said it temporarily shut down the terminal, but insisted it would continue providing minimal fuel supplies to the Palestinian territory that has been under a crippling blockade for months.

While Hamas did not claim the border raid, its armed wing said it fired three homemade rockets at the evening after the battle, the first time it has claimed such an attack on Israel since the beginning of March.

The two sides had refrained from engaging in any major attacks for several weeks, following a massive Israeli military assault on Gaza launched in late February that killed 130 Palestinians and five Israelis.

But as Tuesday, Hamas threatened to renew Gaza's borders in a repeat of a breach in January that sent hundreds of thousands of weary Palestinians streaming into Egypt to stock up on goods they said got so home because of a right Israeli-imposed embargo. AFP

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Lungless frog could shed light on evolution, says biologist

JAKARTA—THE DISCOVERY OF A RARE species of Indonesian frog that breathes without lungs could shed light on how evolution works, a scientist said Friday.

A dissection of the frog, found on Sumatra island last August, showed it breathed entirely through its skin, biologist David Blackburn said.

While many frogs breathe partially through their skin, the Barisia imogen known as the first to have entirely evolved away from having lungs, he said.

The team counter to one of the key events in evolution, when animals developed primitive lungs and moved from water to land.

"Here is a frog that has reversed that trend, it has totally turned against the conventional wisdom. If you will, of millions of years of evolution," said Blackburn, a biologist at the National University of Singapore.

The frog appears to have developed its lungs over millions of years to adapt to its home in the fast-flowing cold water rivers in the island's rainforests, Blackburn said.

Cold water contains more oxygen, making it possible to breathe through skin, he added.

A RARE species of Indonesian frog that breathes without lungs (above in Borneo). AFP

Only three other amphibians—two species of salamander and a wormlike creature called a caecilian—are known to have evolved to breath without lungs.

"It's like a cookie, it's almost completely flat. So instantly when you pick it up to the water you know this thing is strange," said Blackburn.

"It's astonishingly cute, you know, like a bulldog's nose. It's one of those things that is so ugly, it's cute."

Hundreds of new species of lizard, mammal and plant have been discovered on Borneo. AFP

WHAT'S INSIDE
Immelman, Rose share first-round lead /A23

SPORTS

Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

Mavs lasso Jazz, gain playoffs /A24

Mamiit victory gives RP a split

Tierro yields to Uzbek No. 1; pivotal doubles up

By Musong R. Castillo

CECIL MAMIIT FACED THE APPLAUDING, roaring crowd, lifted his sweat-soaked shirt and then thumped his chest repeatedly to celebrate the win.

The triumphant show came after Mamiit's 6-four-4 rival Denis Dunlop retired in the third set to give host Philippines a split with Uzbekistan after the opening singles of the Davis Cup Asia-Oceania Group I relegation tie.

Dunlop fell on his stomach after a futile lunge at a silly drop shot by the 5-8 Mamiit and narrowly missed due to fatigue at the Ayala-like Philippine Colombian Association court in Pasay, Manila.

The Uzbekistan No. 2 won the first set, 7-5, Mamiit won the second at 6-3, and the count was tied at 3-all when the match was suspended due to the approaching darkness.

Uzbekistan earlier won the first singles rubber through world-ranked Denis Istomin, who proved just too good for Patrick Jude Chiong.

Tapped to start in place of Eric Taino, the 21-year-old Tierro won in the game against his seasoned, power-serving foe, who prevailed, 6-4, 6-2, 6-3, in just one hour and 50 minutes.

The decisive doubles match, pitting the ranked Mamiit-Taino tandem against Istomin and Dunlop, is set at 3 p.m. today.

"We're just trying our hardest here," said Mamiit after the two-hour, 50-minute match, which had Dunlop warning to cramp up in both thighs early in the third set.

Dunlop, to his credit, showed he had a big heart, too, as he gamely went on. But it was clear that he had nothing more to give, as Mamiit ran him from one end of the court to the other.

"It's good to start out here with at least a win," added Mamiit, who runs his 85th Davis Cup match for the Philippines. "We're looking forward to the doubles. We're trying to regain respect and to do that, doubles will be key."

Mamiit did not only show a big heart, but supreme conditioning as well as he looked as one playing in the punishing heat, while Dunlop started showing discomfort as early as the middle part of the second set.

"I feel fine," Mamiit said, when asked if the heat drained him as well. "I just had a little hungry.

"I don't think he (Dunlop) will be playing for the doubles today," Taino told the boysen in a brief chat. "It's either they use him for the reverse singles or he's too hurt to come out and play."

Dunlop actually had Mamiit in trouble in the third set, racing to a 4-1 lead even with for-the-lunge appearing in his thighs during breaks. In server was his cramping. But the team trainer was allowed to attend to him.

In the end, Asia people aristocrating to Dunlop tried to relieve him of the pain, while Mamiit was busy working the crowd, which roared to a samba-playing band.

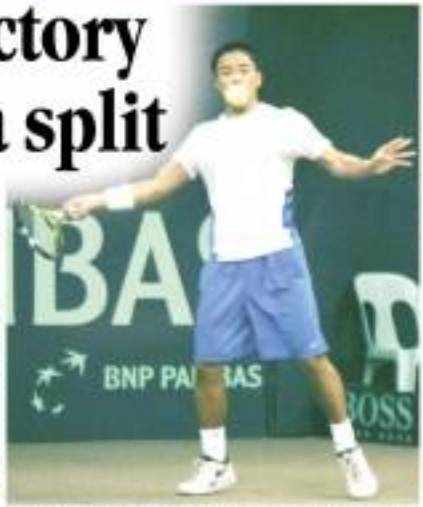
Istomin, ranked 106th in the world who has had experiences playing against Roger Federer and Lleyton Hewitt, was in complete command, winning with an overhead rune against Tierro, who was the surprise pick to start off hostilities for the Philippines.

Tierro had a chance to seize control of the first set, overhanding a 5-3 deficit before blowing advantage in the seventh game on Istomin's serves, which would have given the Philippines a 4-3 edge.

From there, Istomin took command with his overpowering serves.

The Philippines, first made up of a team of Michael Sibal, Joseph Lizardo and Robert Angeles, lost, 6-0, the last time it clashed with Uzbekistan at the Dynamic centers in Tashkent 11 years ago.

The winner of the tie stays in Group I with the loser dropping to the lower bracket.



BEHIND victory. Cecil Mamiit evades Purabi Mukerjee at back end of the court.

Ready to rumble again

BOXER-TURNED-BOXING-BUFF-ADMIRING-ER Michael Buffer is recovering and broke his Los Angeles home after undergoing surgery recently to remove recurrence tumors from the throat and neck.

According to boxing website www.maxboxing.com, the man who made famous the light introductive "Let's get ready to rumble" was diagnosed with cancer in mid-February.

"I am recovering well," said Buffer, who was chairman Manny Pacquiao to the crowd in each of his last 19 fights.

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DRIVE AND RIDE THE WAVES

Harbour back in the fray; Hapee faces Toyota

HARBOUR CENTRE, A DISAPPOINTING runner-up in its recent international campaign, returns to the Philippine basketball League today to frontcourt reputation mates.

Starting Pier remains favored to smash their conference one on nine games in the Upstream Amino Sports Cup as they tackle the Noska Philippine Youth Team at 11 noon at The Service in San Juan.

"Our setback in the Stoke tournament was temporary; we're really focused on this tournament," said coach Jorge Gallent, whose stands were dethroned by host Indonesia in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Stoke) Champions Cup in Jakarta last week.

"Everybody knows what happened to us in Jakarta. Alvarez (Elmer) was allowed to play [as an import]; it could have been a different story."

The workhorse pair of James Castro and TY Tang are expected to sustain their strong showing from the Jakarta club tournament.

Hapee Toothpaste will take up to preserve its winning run when it takes on Toyota Otis at 4 p.m., while Phanex arrives to snap a three-game losing skid against Sooms Shoes at 2.

"I think they (Sparks) have already settled down; we have to prepare very hard for them," said Hapee coach Louie Alas of Toyota Otis, last Friday's conqueror, which he ensured to a runner up finish in the 2006 Unity Cup.

The Complete Protectors, running second at 6-3, will shoot for their fifth straight triumph with the emergent Army Cruz, Mark Barbosan, Larry Rodriguez, Saul Jorolla and Filoto Gale/Sarmenal.

"I expect Army to produce big numbers again," said Alas of Cruz, the reigning UAAP Most Valuable Player who averaged 17 points in his last four outings.

The 88' Youth stint is part of its training for the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Stoke) Youth tournament in Kuala Lumpur on May 1 and the Asian Youth Championship in Tehran in September. Antonio M. Rojo

Lady Falcons crush Blazers, near VL sweep

By Ramon S. Acerio

THE ADAMSON LADY FALCONS SOARED to within a win of sweeping the first round of elimination with a 25-19, 25-13, 25-15 pasting of newcomer College of St. Benilde Lady Blazers yesterday in the Shakey's V-League Season 8 at The Arena in San Juan City.

The Lady Falcons bolstered our three-fourth straight-set victory to post 6-1 tallies.

Angela Benting wound up with 16 points, including 12 kills, while Irish Laquilles and guest player Nerisa Bautista added 12 and 11 points, respectively.

The Lady Falcons got for a sweep tomorrow at 4 p.m. against the Lady Tamaraws, who beat them for the UAAP title in a sudden death duel recently.

The Lady Blazers have yet to win after four tries.

In the opener, San Sebastian College finally lived up to expectations when it disposed of the St. Scholastica's Lady Doctors, 25-15, 25-12, 25-17, to draw second place with Ateneo at 3-1.

"After our loss to Adamson (last Tuesday) I challenged my players to step up and they just did," said SSC coach Roger Gorayeb. "We should've done better in offense since we committed a lot of errors against the Falcons."

The Lady Stags connected 37 hits in 111 tries, with Lorenza Ann Lelipet and Jhoei Montelpre accounting for eight points each. Ryabelle Devanadera squared for the lead in three-time NCAA champion with 13 points, including three blocks.

FEU had 12 more neat attacks than Instanian but would only make 19 points off those tries, owing to the Lady Stags' defense.

Lelipet and Montelpre finished with 9 points apiece and rookie Joy Benitez added seven.

FEU's third straight loss dropped the Lady Tams to a tie for fourth and fifth place with idle Lyceum at 1-3.

No Lady Tamaraw scored in double digits as Irish Miranda was good for just a team-high nine markers and Cherry Wena had only four.

COLLEGE of St. Benilde's Lilet Mahinay(c) goes for a kill off Nisa Jane Lagrollas and Janet Serafica of Adamson.

Filoil caging: Archers, Lions open bid tomorrow

DEFENDING CHAMpion La Salle and runner-up San Beda take on separate foes at the start of the 2008 Filoil Flying V Preseason International Cup tomorrow at the Multipurpose Arena in Pasig City.

After the 1 p.m. opening ceremony, the NCAA champion Green Archers face Lyceum of the Philippines University at 2 p.m.

Defeat against Collegiate Champions League foe Ateneo Blue Eagles at 2 p.m.

The clash between UAAP titleholder Archers and the Jose Rizal University Heavy Bombers got going at 4 p.m.

A cheerdance contest and breakdancing performances highlight the kickoff rites.

The semifinal duels are scheduled next Saturday, same with the finale.

Other teams awaiting action are UAAP runner-up University of the East, Santo Tomas, Adamson, Far Eastern, National U, Mapua, Letran, St. Benilde, Perpetual Help and San Sebastian.

The games will be aired over RPN 9 on Destiny Cable Channel 34 and IBC 13.

General admission tickets are available at the Araneta Coliseum TicketNet booths and at TicketNet outlets in all SM malls. For inquiries, call 911-5555. Antonio M. Rojo

SPORTSWATCH

Shell motorcycle, scooter challenge revs up today

THE SECOND LEG OF THE 2008 SHELL Advance motorcycle and scooter challenge revs off today at the Manila Speedway.

Participants can show off their driving skills at the same time increase their knowledge of traffic rules and regulations.

Drivers accompanied by street property are in tackling the traffic obstacle course. Bike modifications is unnecessary.

Action-packed will also be held on the stock and Open categories. The events are open to riders with valid driver's licenses.

Up for grabs are P5,000 for first place, 3,000 for the runner-up and 2,000 for the third placer.

The last bike in the stock and Open categories will get P5,000 each, second placers P1,500 apiece and third placers will be given P1,000.

For inquiries, call BingBong Dalisay at 09064011 or 0911-4110332 (SMS-WIKHOO) and 3922-9192341.

SJC 'Rambulan' series today

THE SHOWDOWN OF COUNTRY DAMplores resume today at the San Juan College with the semifinal round of the P125-000-added Rambulan Invitational cocktail derby.

Some 80 lights are scheduled.

Winners from the elimination rounds last Monday and Wednesday will compete today among three Gold Bulls 3000s Drago, Boy "Garry-Boy" Espino, Fortis Manokan's Tady Pulma, Louie Diaz, Jose Ramos, Jr., Ed Ramos, Jason Ramos, Pio Estrellado, Mac Cruz and Ray Rimon among others.

The blockbuster satchel has drawn more than 600 entries, according to pit manager Horatio Sibo.

Cookers from Master Manila and the private-invited Manila Grand Prix smoothmats may join the last day of eliminations on April 21 at SJC Safety Inn in PFI, Bill.

SOLO LEADER. Wesley Se-kwan Sue leads.

Wesley streaks to fifth victory

Standings after 5 rounds

1-2	GM Wesley Se-kwan Sue (PHI)	5
3-5	Grandmasters Georgi Lazarev (USA), Mikhail Ilnitsky (Kaz), Vladimir Georgiev (Ukraine), Ji Jing (Qatar), Yuriy Vovk (Ukraine), Ognjen Cvitan (Croatia), Ivan Sokolov (Netherlands), Gabor Kallai (Hungary), Vladimir Akopian (Armenia), Yuriy Kruppa (Russia), Ivan Cheparinov (Bulgaria), Yuriy Kuzubov (Ukraine

Poor start? Woods has been there before

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA—THE STORIES that coursed loud all been accounted for by the time Tiger Woods snuck into semivoice the practice green just off the first tee and began chasers mindlessly stroking four-footers.

"This wasn't as much a practice session as it was therapy."

A few minutes earlier, he had pronounced himself satisfied with a first round that seemed prodestrian by the high standards of the greatest player to the game.

After the round, he spotted a few balls without much purpose, running one up a hillcrest leaving another well short. Pseudo-didn't even bother to obtain them off, picking up his balls after less than 15 minutes on the green and heading for the clubhouse.

The scoreboard certainly didn't tell the story. On a day when Augusta National seemed primed for scything, Woods shot as predictable a 72 as he could put together to stand four shots behind perennial first-round leader Justin Rose and Trevor Immelman.

He adds are still good, however, that Woods will win As church of the second leader will show that he surely posts a good score on Thursday at Augusta National, where he hasn't broken par in the first round for six years. He's never led after the first round, never shot lower than this 72 (See graphics on this page).

All in all, it was a typical Woods opening round in the Masters.

His player anxiously not only to get a feel of the course but to get a feeling of what the players around him are doing. Then he goes back home, figures it all, and figures out a game plan that will bring him to the 18th green on Sunday with the green jacket waiting for him.

He could be there on Sunday again for one more time. He is Tiger Woods. AP

Tiger Woods' first-round Masters record			
Year	Score	Place	Finish
1997	72	24th	+1st
1998	70	17th	MC
1999	75	45th	Won
2000	71	9th	8th
2001	72	29th	15th
2002	70	13th	Won
2003	72	7th	Won
2004	76	42nd	13th
2005	74	34th	Won
2006	73	19th	2nd
2007	73	14th	2nd
2008	72	15th	—

US MASTERS

Immelman, Rose share 1st-round lead

JUSTIN Rose blasts out of a trap.

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA—JUSTIN Rose overcame a ragged start with four straight birdies that carried him to a 4-under 68 and his name atop the leaderboard, which is becoming a tradition this an either—at least on Thursdays at the Masters.

It was the third straight time he has held at least a share of the 18-hole lead at Augusta National.

Trevor Immelman, who made a weekend getaway to Augusta a few weeks ago with Rose and Ian Poulter, ate shot on 68. They were one shot ahead of Lee Westwood, Brandt Snedeker and Marcus Fraser Brian Bateman.

Tiger Woods failed to make a birdie for the first time since the opening round in 2002, although there was no reason to panic. His best highlight was chipping in for eagle from 25 feet behind the 15th. On hell falling on the 8-

WOODS: Never a first-round leader

nd was that not Woods into a fist-pumping rework. It helped him salvage an even par 72, putting him in a tie for 30th, four shots behind.

"I played a lot better than what my score indicates," said Woods, who has never shot better than 70 in the first round of the Masters. "I kept myself in the tournament, I'm right there."

But he was hardly alone.

Eighteen players broke par on a warm, gentle day that might be as good as it gets this week—no gusts, only a trace of wind and screened holes to caution that allowed for birdies.

There were a few surprises, such as 51-year-old Mark O'Meara, who celebrated the 10-year anniversary of his green jacket with a 71. And among the familiar faces were Phil Mickelson, the Masters champions, who opened with an amazing birdie and settled for a 71.

There also was a familiar sound—a few of those Augusta roars—even if Woods didn't hear them.

"The way the golf course plays now, you don't really chase low rounds here anymore," Woods said. "You're just get in play along. It's playing more of a US Open than it is a Masters. There was really one way I heard all day and that was Poulter's eagle. But other than that, it was really quiet."

Woods could not have been listening closely to a few familiar sounds on a warm, spring afternoon in golf's penultimate garden.

■ Mickelson said felt sure the first green in a wallowing his ball on plus sixes. Using a putter, the ball scooted up the slope and rattled the pin before falling, running bogey to name was a birdie.

"It was at least a two-shot swing, possibly three," Mickelson said.

■ Defending champion Zach Johnson, hoping to power last year vaes on flake, could only stung when his 45-foot birdie putt went up over a ridge and into the cup for a birdie on the fifth.

■ Woodser raced six 6-iron from 160 yards on the 16th, watching the ball framed down the slope and into the cup for an ace.

There was a big ovation again for Arnold Palmer, smacking his ceremonial tee shot so far that he never saw it land—but that was only because of vaupa big that caused a one-hour delay. Palmer's drive followed Gary Player up the 1-hit fairway as the three-time Masters champion set a record by playing for the 51st time. He shot 65.

"I heard some roars today," Arnold Oberholzer said after a 71. Despite playing with injuries that will keep him out for two months, after this tournament is over. "But this is about as easy as it's going to play for the week." AP

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SPORTS

National Capital Region mows down Prisaa opposition

By Cordell B. Tajon
Inquirer Visayas

ZAMBOANGA CITY—NATIONAL CAPITAL Region, showcasing its athletics and swimming, moved closer to the overall crown yesterday in the National Private School Athletic Association Games here.

With the tandem capturing 19 gold and 16 more treadmill logging night, NCR hiked its total to an astounding 71 golds, a whopping 43 more than their nearest defending champion Western Visayas, whose only hope of a rally is in the last two days now on track sports, like diana, football and volleyball.

NCR encountered little resistance again at the Joaquin Enrique Memorial Sports Complex pool as Ian Bede's Fintil, Carol Feijillana came up with record-smashing wins in the 400-meter medley (5 minutes 10.42) and 200m free (2:59.03).

University of Notre Dame Marcelo Bridges and Linnie Marquez shared be the women's wins, setting new meet marks in the 400m IM (5:47.30) and 100m back (1:11.81), respectively.

The duo also keyed NCR's victory in the women's 4x50m free (1:39.26).

Also setting home their second bulk ridal gold medals were Josephine Pehlad, winner of the women's 200m breast in 2:39.63, and Edsor Bengkson, men's 200m breast in 2:30.74.

Western Visayas bagged five golds in rollerskating, thanks to Christel Lagunday in the 2500m freestyle and the 4x100m medley relay.

Over at the track, reigning DAWTSSM Valuable Player Bernardito Eling-ano completed his third gold after sealing the women's 800m Thursday to complement her wins in the 1500m and 3000m.

NCR also swept men's and women's heptathlon with Eugene Ramos and Cristel Vinoya ruled kumbok with a 6-3 2 gold, silver-bronze count, followed by Cordillera with 4-3-1-0.

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR OLYMPIANS

Mary Antoinette Rivero: Living her Childhood Dream

She was just four years old, watching her two older brothers in the sidelines while they did their "poomsae" (or forms) and sparring during their Taekwondo training. Today at 20, Mary Antoinette Rivero or Toni as she is called, is no longer a mere spectator. She is now on the center of all the action. All eyes will be on Toni at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, her second stint at the most-awaited Summer Games, having participated as the youngest competitor in Athens last 2004.

Toni is determined to do the best she can in the upcoming Olympics. "This year, being my second time at the Olympic games, I plan to surpass what I reached in Athens and to do that, it's important to be positive, determined, focused and pushed," Toni made it into the finals in the 2004 Olympic games when she was just 16 years old.

The 5-foot 8 Olympian has established her mind into winning. "One of the best attributes of Filipino athletes that I've observed is the fact that we won't leave without putting up a good fight. Filipinos are also known for being brave and never-say-die as an established fighting spirit."

Toni's positive disposition most probably comes from the unwavering support she gets from her family. She adds, "Knowing that my parents and family support me is really a big factor in my performance."

Athleticism definitely runs in the Rivero family. Toni's mom and dad were both into martial arts while her two older brothers are national Taekwondo team members as well. "Since Taekwondo especially with my family's influence, it's my sport wasn't Taekwondo, I'd still stick with martial arts," said Toni with conviction.

Having siblings who are also part of the national team proved to be an advantage for Toni. "My brothers share their techniques and help me in my training." The normal training schedule for Toni consists of three sparring trainings per day, one in the morning, one before lunch and one at night. She also lifts weights and runs for added strength and agility.

The support of the Filipino people is an added motivation for our athletes as attested by Toni. During the Manila SEA Games in 2005, Toni felt the added boost when she felt the support from her countrymen. "Sea pog (magic) complete ko sa home country mo, hindi lang pang athlete pang sportsmanship, pati pang Filipino people," she exclaimed in the interview. "It's really different when you have everybody's support."

Inquiring the Filipino people is really behind our athletes is the main reason why Microsoft Philippines decided to embark in the Olympians campaign in partnership with the Philippine Olympic Committee. The main goal of the campaign is to empower our Filipino athletes at the 2008 Beijing Olympics and promote the internet for all Filipinos to show their support for the Olympians.

Ellen Hall, Philippines Managing Director Robert Rutter said, "Historically our athletes by showing our support is already a big enough boost for them, especially in the upcoming Olympics. We want to heighten that support for our athletes through Olympians. This way, Filipinos everywhere would know that we have young individuals like Toni competing not only for themselves, but for national pride."

Toni appreciates initiatives that support Filipino athletes like her. "This campaign will help us a lot. As an athlete, it is important to have this exposure that would boost your morale and make other Filipinos aware of what we're doing to help bring honor to the country."

To brother Go, the other Filipino Taekwondo Athlete qualified for the 2008 Beijing Olympics will train with Toni for three months in Korea prior to the actual games in August.

After the Olympics Toni plans to continue her Taekwondo training and focus on their family-inspired pusup, a gym dedicated to Taekwondo, which may well be the training ground for future Olympians.

At her young age, Toni has proven that one can live her dreams as long as she sets her mind into it and initiative actions such as respect, patience and determination. Having mastered the way of the kick and the fist, with Toni, nothing is impossible.

Mavs lasso Jazz, gain playoffs

DALLAS, TEXAS—JJJ Stoudemire scored 32 points and made the game-winning three-pointer with under one second to go as Dallas clinched a playoff berth with a 97-94 win over the Utah Jazz on Thursday.

Jason Terry scored all 21 of his points in the second half for Dallas which recorded its fifth win in its last six games.

"When the playoffs start, we're going to all have to play a high level because the Western Conference is so deep and we've got to have everyone playing well," Stoudemire said.

Utah was down by three when Deron Williams hooked in a 3-pointer from the left wing to tie the game with five seconds remaining.

But the Mavericks did not call a timeout and raced down the court, Stoudemire who was left all alone on the left side of the key, drained the outside shot to give Dallas a 97-94 edge with nine-tenths of a second to play.

"I saw the ball go in off the glass and I knew we didn't have a timeout left," Stoudemire said. "Usually you take a time out there and set up a play. We all knew that we didn't have a timeout left, so Kidd took it out really quick and got it to Eddie (Jones)."

"Eddie did a good job of putting the ball and making the defense collapse on him. I was wide open on the wing, and at that point, I really didn't know how much time was left, but I knew I had to let it go—and I'm happy it went in."

Williams' desperation 3-pointer was off the mark, as Dallas (50-29) sealed its eighth straight 50-win season.

In Oakland, California, Allen Iverson scored 33 points, JR Smith added 24 off the bench and Denver took control of the race for the Nets' final playoff spot with a 114-106 victory over the Golden State Warriors.

The win moved Denver a full game ahead of Golden State in the race for eighth place in the West with only three games remaining. The Nuggets also ousted the defenders, meaning they can clinch their fifth straight playoff berth by winning two of their final three games.

With the victory, Denver also gift-wrapped the seventh seed in the West for the Dallas Mavericks.

In Los Angeles, Lake Shildon scored 13 of his 18 points in the fourth quarter and the Lakers won their fifth game in six outgameswere after dipping the Clippers to clinch, 109-79.

The victory moved the Lakers (54-25) a-ahead 1½ games of the Western Conference leading New Orleans Hornets entering Friday night's showdown between the teams.

Kobe Bryant scored 16 points for the Lakers, who blew the game open by outscoring the Clippers 32-11 in fourth the final quarter and start the fourth by a 94-67 lead with 9:1-minutes left. AFP, AP

DENVER's reserve JR Smith sparks the Nuggets off the bench with 24 points, including two in the breakaway dunk. AP

Future triathletes plunge into action tomorrow

THE SEARCH FOR FUTURE triathlon champions begins tomorrow with the dipping of the Superdiable Multisport Festival at the Ayala Subang Village in Muntinlupa.

Triathlon and aquathlon meet for children 10 years and younger will be held at the Swan Pools and at the Olympic Village pool of Dr. Lo Gallo Lowe.

"The one triathletes to be some world-class at a later day, we should start them young," said Triathlon Association of the Philippines (Tap) president Tom Carrasco.

Those still in the age category for both events which will be contested on carrying the classes.

A spider triathlon for parents and beginners serves as side event.

Sen. Pia Cayetano is one of the cabinet secretary of Federal organized by Tap and the Ayala Alabang Village Association.

Steve Silva, Contributor

Tuason aces eye repeat win in Shell kart series

DEFENDING WINNERS RORY Reales and Joey Cabezas of KJP-Tuason Racing gun for repeat victories in the second leg of the 2008 Shell Multi Racing Series today at the Batangas Racing Circuit in Rosario, Batangas.

Reales, who will be up against more experienced karters more in the ROK Junior Expert Class, comes off a daring win in the opening leg where he executed a decisive maneuver in the last few laps to wrest the lead from rivals Vincent Allan Ortiz and Jed Bonifacio of Archering.

Ortiz, meanwhile, is out to prove that his victory over Nino Dacayanan of Jet Racing and Andrew Zaldua of ALTS in the ROK Junior Novice class was no fluke.

Also seeking their second straight wins are Cebu's Roger Cabrel in the Mini-ROK class, Jet Racing's Ramon Reyes in the Pro-Made SL Novice division and Christian Gaddi, also of Jet Racing, in the Cadet 60 class.

BUSINESS

Editor Raul G. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

Gov't to lower growth target for 2008

Rising food prices to curb expansion

By Michelle V. Rerra

THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPment Authority said it was reviewing the official gross domestic product (GDP) growth target of 6.3 to 7 percent for this year as the rising prices of food and other commodities were seen to adversely impact on the economy.

Neda Director General Augusto Santos said the government early assumed a 5- to 5-percent average inflation rate for the year when the GDP growth target was set. Inflation has risen beyond 5 percent since February.

The National Statistics Office earlier reported that year-on-year inflation accelerated to 8.4 percent in March from 5.4 percent in February and 6.9 percent in January. Santos said a study by government economists that was presented to Malacañang showed that inflation could soon reach 8 percent.

"Faster inflation normally reduces GDP growth because it adversely affects consumption and production," Santos told the business.

Accelerated increases in prices usually dampen consumer spending and investments by businesses, two main drivers of GDP growth.

Santos said the members of the Joint-agency Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) would meet soon to discuss the proposed changes to the GDP growth target and other economic assumptions for 2007.

The economy posted a robust 7.3-percent growth last year. It was the highest in 31 years and came with a benign inflation environment. Consumer prices rose by only 2.8 percent last year, much slower than the government's target of 4 to 5 percent.

Aside from the absence of

BGVT, B2

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱41.195= $1

As of 5 p.m., April 11, 2008

₱103.84 = ¥1

As of 5 p.m., April 11, 2008

GOLD: ₱1,510.40/g

per metric troy ounce, April 11, 2008

STOCK MARKET

Stocks close 0.5% lower

PSEi COMPOSITE INDEX

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.5 percent lower amid concerns about rising inflation and the state of the US economy, dealers said.

They cited worries about rising food costs at home and a recession in the United States, the country's biggest trading partner.

The composite index lost 14.13 points or 2,540.38. Its weekend finish is two-week.

The all-share index fell 7.11 points to 1,806.97.

Volume was 388.7 million shares worth ₱2.6 billion. There were 68 decliners and 36 advancers, while 78 were steady.

"It appears that investors are still in a wait-and-see mode because there's a lot of uncertainty. They are not rushing back into the market. But it is also clear that the declines this week were not as exaggerated as those we've seen on a long time ago," said Nestor Aguila of GB Market Securities.

Ayala Land fell 2.2 percent to ₱19.58.

San Miguel "B" was steady at ₱83.00. Its "B" shares rose 1.1 percent to ₱49.50.

AFP

Data source: Reuters (see Page B2)

INVESTMENTS, EXPORTS

IMF cuts forecasts for RP

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY Fund has scaled down its export and investment growth outlook for the Philippines this year, warning that spillovers from the looming US recession to the whole of Asia could shift from "moderate" to "substantial."

In its regional economic outlook for Asia and the Pacific released in Washington D.C. last night, the IMF trimmed its real-export growth forecast for the Philippines this year to 2.6 percent from 7.3 percent made during the previous assessment in October. However, a recovery to 6 percent rate is projected for 2009.

The investment growth outlook was also lowered to 9.9 percent from 10.5 percent for 2008, but a 9.6-percent expansion was forecast for next year.

Overall, the IMF maintained its forecast of a 5.8-percent growth for gross domestic product, as projected last October, on expectation of a slightly higher private consumption growth of 5.8 percent against its earlier forecast of 5.6 percent.

The growth forecast for the Philippines was in line with the projected average for the five biggest economies of Southeast Asia (Asean-5): Indonesia (6.1 percent), Malaysia (5 percent), Thailand (5.3 percent) and Vietnam (7.3 percent).

In 2007, the Philippine domestic economy grew by 7.3 percent, its fastest pace in 31 years, on the back of a 6-percent growth in private consumption, 8.5-percent expansion in investments and 5.1-percent growth in real export earnings.

"Asean-5 growth should decline only modestly in 2008 (from 6.3

BBC STORY, B2

IN THIS ISSUE

■ **San Miguel Brewery net P2.5B as of March, up 37%** /B2

■ **Garments firms urge Jpepa passage** /B2

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San Miguel Brewery net ₱2.5B as of March, up 37%

By Desiree L. Lucas

SAN MIGUEL BREWERY (SMB) yesterday said that its sales in the first quarter improved significantly on the back of higher volume turnover.

In a statement, the unit of food conglomerate San Miguel Corp. said that net sales in the first quarter of 2008 rose 13 percent on a year-on-year basis to ₱12.3 billion from ₱10.8 billion in the same period last year.

This was due primarily to an 10-percent increase in sales volume, the company said during its investors briefing ahead of its initial public offering next month.

"SMB sales volumes reached 4[illegible] million cases in the first three months of 2008," it said in its statement.

Operating income increased to ₱5.7 billion in the first quarter of 2008, an increase of 33 percent from the first quarter of last year. Reported earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization grew 31 percent to ₱4.23 billion.

Net income after tax grew 37 percent to ₱2.5 billion for the first quarter of 2008.

The earnings growth was driven by increased volumes and the continued cost management efforts.

During yesterday's meeting of the company's board of directors, SMC approved a cash dividend of ₱0.16 per share, representing a 100-percent payout from the first quarter net income.

San Miguel Corp. spun off San Miguel Brewery last year.

The San Miguel Brewery offer will raise for the company as much as ₱27.9 billion if the company exercises its offer at the top end of the ₱6.9-₱9.46 offer range.

At its lowest, SMB will still raise ₱7.1 billion from the IPO.

Almost 1.8 billion common shares—including provisions for oversubscription—will be sold to investors on 04 this number, 77 million to 134.8 million will be new shares, while 683.4 million to 1.4 billion will be secondary shares which are currently owned by SMC.

After the IPO, the beer maker will have a market capitalization of as high as ₱228.3 billion—enough to propel it to the ranks of blue chip listed firms—and making the stock significantly larger than its parent firm, San Miguel Corp.

Garments firms urge Jpepa passage

By Bernel W. Dormingo

THE CONFEDERATION OF GARMENTS Exporters of the Philippines urged the Senate to ratify the Japan Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement, saying this would help the domestic industry get back on its feet.

Congress president Lawrence Velasco stated in a briefing that "with a little tweaking," the Jpepa would bring in an immediate ₱200 million in additional exports and 7,000 additional jobs for the sector.

Before fashion said the industry suffered a 13-percent drop in export earnings in 2007, and Congo's seven biggest members accounted for ₱900 million of 2007 exports.

He said the 50-member Congo, which represents half of the industry in terms of shipment values, was hoping for the sector to at least match those earnings in 2008.

"We are seeing another negative growth year because buyers from the United States—which account for about [illegible] exports and [illegible] export experts—are adjusting their orders in view of concerns about the US economy," Velasco said.

FPHC pushes back preferred rights issue

THE PHILIPPINE AND OVERSEAS Lands for the preferred shares issue of First Philippine Holdings Corp. has been pushed back further as the company's auditors restate financial statements to conform with new international accounting rules.

In a statement to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), First Holdings said that the final dividend yield for its preferred shares will now be announced on April 21. The offer period will start on April 18.

"[The company's] auditors have—for the purpose of presenting comparative financial statements as of and for each of the three years in the period ended Dec. 31, 2007—sought additional time to review the restatement of the consolidated financial position and results of operations covering the years ended 2005 and 2006," it said.

"This, however, will have no impact or effect on our 2007 consolidated financial results previously disclosed," the company added.

In a separate text message to the business, the head of the company's underwriting firm said that he expected nominal changes in the pricing of the preferred shares despite the postponement.

BDO Capital & Investment Corp. president Ed Francisco added that the underwriters were intent to buy more shares than the required minimum of the market in the issue.

Yesterday's announcement marks the second time that the Lopez family-controlled holding firm moved back the timetable of its P10 billion offer.

Previously, from First Philippine Holdings' preferred shares offer—with a provision for another P2 billion depending on the market's appetite—will be used to repay and refinance its maturing obligations this year, as well as to fund acquisitions in the power and infrastructure sectors.

Company president and CEO Elpidio L. Ibañez also said last week that the building firm may raise additional funds as early as this year to refinance a $50-dollar denominated loan that will mature next year, depending on market conditions. Jasmin C. Lucas

Gov't to lower growth target . . .

From page B1

position on tightening supply of rice and other food products, the appreciation of the peso also helped temper the increase in consumer prices last year.

Although the year is seen to remain relatively strong this year, analysts do not expect it to be enough to offset the difficulties of rising food prices and loose inflation within the 3- to 5-percent assumption.

Santos said the flatter increase in prices was driven both by supply and demand pressures.

He said climate change and the conversion of many farmlands into real estate development seems in many countries were causing tightening supply of rice and food.

The growing economies of India and China were increasing global demand for food, he pointed out.

"There is a very strong correlation between economic prosperity and food consumption. Because China and India, which have a combined population of about 2 billion, are becoming economically prosperous, global consumption is rising," Santos said.

IMF cuts forecasts . . .

From page B1

percent in 2007), reflecting frequent domestic demand and the subsequent consumption recession," the IMF said, noting that the Philippines, in particular, was "enjoying strong consumption and remittance flows."

But the IMF report concluded that Asia has not "decoupled" from the US economy and that spillovers could be significant.

"While policymakers have been focused on ramping Asia on average—a 1 percentage point slowdown in the United States has led to a 1.25–1.5 percentage points average slowdown; [Japan is at the lower end of this range]—there are reasons to believe that the current US slowdown would have a significantly larger impact," the IMF said.

In particular, the IMF said there was rising evidence that spillover from the US, in particular to China, had risen in recent years and that the financial market contagion and global confidence effects current to play "would come significantly the size of spillovers."

It said the 2001 downturn had at the tech recession underscored that the impact of lower US growth on Asia could be "substantial."

The report noted that China, Singapore, Hong Kong and the Philippines have found to unchanged export shares to non-advanced markets (outside US, Europe and Japan) over the past three years amid an overall healthy growth in exports.

"A key question is whether demand from non-traditional markets will hold up as growth commences slow in the United States and the European Union," the IMF said.

The study's emerging Asia was seen to grow slower at 7.6 percent this year from 9.3 percent last year.

China's growth in 2008 was projected to drop by about 2 percentage points to 9.3 percent, reflecting a decline in net exports as demand from major trading partners slows. India's growth was likewise seen easing by 1.25 percentage points to 7.9 percent, driven by a slowdown in investments on tightening credit conditions.

In Japan, the pace of activity was seen to ease to 1.1 percent from 2.1 percent in 2007 owing to weaker foreign demand and consumption.

The IMF also warned of a protracted slowdown in activity in Asia in case of a marked deterioration of financial market conditions leading to lower global growth.

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Rise in prices of local food fish looms

By Ronnel W. Domingo

AN ADVOCACY GROUP FOR SMALL FISHERS has yesterday warned of a looming increase in the prices of local fish, citing a growing supply deficit that is projected to average at 400,000 million metric tons yearly through 2020.

The following Municipality Master fisheries plan prepared with local fish on the lack of government support for small fishers, saying that current programs favor export-oriented aquaculture operations.

Most of what are caught in Philippine waters and produced in aquaculture go to foreign countries, said Fisheries Director Malcolm. "There is not enough for the domestic market."

BM is a coalition of 14 fisher federations and independent organizations, representing marginalized workers.

Headed the dominant decree of the domestic industry has led to overfishing and unsustainable aquaculture practices that later pushed the sector onto the "verge of resource collapse."

Citing data from the Comprehensive National Fishery Industry Development Plan, Alternatives demand "is projected to increase to 4.2 million MT by 2025 when the deficit would reach 380,000 MT.

"That means an average deficit of 400,000 MT yearly."

In study, WB paints RP poverty picture

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE POOREST 20 PERCENT OF FILIPINO families account for a meager 5.6 percent of the country's consumption spending, while 45 percent of those employed—or usually unpaid family workers and own-account workers—are considered "vulnerable."

The findings are contained in World Development Indicators 2008, released by the World Bank in Washington DC last night at the sidelines of its spring meeting with the International Monetary Fund.

Countries with more unequal distribution of consumption (or income) have a higher rate of poverty for a given average income, the report says.

"On the other hand, "vulnerable" employment measures the portion of the labor force that receives the lowest wages and least security in employment.

The WDI provides a detailed picture of the world through data. It shows, for instance, that 26.7 percent of Filipino children under the age of five are malnourished.

But the report also contains bright indicators in relation to the Philippines' commitments to millennium development goals. According to study, the ratio of Filipino children completing elementary school has gone up from 86 percent in 2000 to 96 percent in 2006. Mortality rate of children aged five and below has likewise gone down to 51 per 1,000 head from 62 per 1,000 over the same period.

On a global basis, the report showed that developing economies now produce 41 percent of the world's output, up from 28 percent in 2000. The combined output of the world's economies reached $59 trillion last year.

Using new measurements that take into account the differences in price levels between countries, China now ranks as the second largest economy in the world, and 5 of the 11 largest economies are developing economies.

"While high-income countries are a comparable global scale, the growing clout of developing countries carries into sharp relief," said Alan Gelb of the World Bank.

The report said developing economies would sometime growing more than high-income countries, thanks to labor surpluses, higher returns to physical capital, and ready access to technology already developed and paid for in high-income economies.

With adequate investment, the report said, developing economies should share the gap with richer economies in the long run.

World rice production to rise 1.8%, says FAO

By Amy R. Remo

THE UNITED NATIONS FOOD AND Agriculture Organization expects world rice production to increase by 1.8 percent, or some 12 million metric tons this year, assuming normal weather conditions prevail.

In a statement posted on its website, FAO said the production increase would ease the current tight supply situation in key rice-producing countries.

According to the latest FAO estimates, paddy production may be one percent in 2007 to 650 million tons.

FAO said stable production increases are expected in all major Asian rice-producing countries, especially Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Thailand, where "supply and demand are rather stretched."

Governments in these countries have already announced various incentives to raise production, it added.

In the Philippines alone, the government had already increased the palay buying price to P17 a kilo, and announced the lifting of the quota on rice and corn importation by private traders.

For this year, the Department of Agriculture's targets rough rice production to be 17.2 million MT.

However, some countries may also make to expand to decrease, mainly due to restrictions in main exporting countries.

"The international rice market is currently facing a particularly difficult situation with demand consistently supply and substantial price increases," FAO Senior Economist Concepcion Calpe said in the statement.

"Higher rice production in 2008 would reduce the pressure, but short-term volatility will probably continue, given the limited supplies available. This implies that the market may or very strongly to any good or bad news about crops or policies."

For 2008, international trade in rice is foreseen to reach 29.9 million MT, or about 1.1 million MT lower than the revised 2007 trade estimate.

US consumer confidence lowest since 2002

WASHINGTON—AMERICANS' GLOOMiness in the economy fell to a new low, dragged down by worries about mounting job losses, record-high home foreclosures and zooming energy prices.

According to the NBC-Wall Street Journal poll, consumer confidence dropped to a mark of 29.5 in April, down from 33.1 in March. The new reading was the worst since the index began in 2002. It marked the fourth month in a row when confidence has fallen to an all-time low.

"Consumers are very pessimistic," said Mark Vitner, economist at Wachovia. "There are not a lot of happy campers out there."

Over the past year, consumer confidence has deteriorated significantly. Worsening problems in housing, banking, the credit, financial turmoil on Wall Street and lofty energy prices have put people in a much more gloomy mood.

Last April, confidence stood at 91.4. The index is based on results from the international polling firm Ipsos.

All the economy's problems are taking a toll on President George W. Bush's approval ratings, too. The public's approval rating on his economic stewardship fell to a low of 27 percent, according to a separate Associated Press-Ipsos poll. Bush's overall job approval rating has stayed low 28 percent, also to all-time low, the poll said.

Many economists believe the country has slipped into its first recession since 2001.

Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke for the first time acknowledged last week that a recession was possible. It was a rare public assurance of the "r" word by a Fed chief.

"Consumer sentiment is cracking at levels we think are consistent with a solid recession at this point," said Brian Bethune, economist at Global Insight.

A measure looking at consumer's feelings about current economic conditions dipped to a 54.6 in April, from 54.7 in March. The new reading was the lowest in six years of records.

Rising unemployment and job insecurity are making people more uneasy.

The government reported last week that employers slashed 80,000 jobs in March, the most in five years and the third straight month where the nation's payrolls were cut. The unemployment rate jumped from 4.8 percent to 5.1 percent, the highest since the aftermath of the devastating Gulf Coast hurricanes. AP

US finance model can still be fixed, Bernanke says

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA—CHAIRMAN OF the US and international financial system need to quickly put reforms in place to ensure confidence in markets disrupted by a global credit crisis, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke said on Thursday.

The current market unrest complicates the process of making changes aimed at erecting a firewall against future crises, Bernanke told the Atlanta Council, but said action could soothe jittery financial markets.

"We do not have the luxury of waiting for markets to stabilize before we think about the future," he said. "Indeed, many of the necessary changes that have been identified—including increasing transparency, improving risk management, and ensuring better coordination among regulators—could provide important support to the process of normalizing our financial markets."

Bernanke spoke as finance ministers and central bank heads of the Group of Seven rich nations gathered for a Friday meeting in Washington, where they are expected to endorse steps to respond to a global crisis that was spurred by rising US mortgage defaults.

Bernanke, head of the US central bank, acknowledged in response to questions that the economic crisis may be the most severe the United States has faced since World War II. Reuters

BERNANKE

Group of 7 to tackle new financial crises

WASHINGTON—GROUP OF SEVEN finance officials gather here Friday in closed door to prevent a repeat of what the IMF chief says is the worst financial crisis since the 1930s Great Depression.

The meeting of key finance ministers and central bank governors comes amid increasingly grim forecasts for the international economic outlook, with worries about a global slowdown and a US recession.

The G7 ministers will weigh a plan drafted by a global group, the Financial Stability Forum (FSF), that would require banks and investment firms to be more transparent in their dealings and boost capital reserves as part of improved risk management to avert future crises.

International Monetary Fund managing director Dominique Strauss-Kahn said Thursday the current global turmoil is "a severe kind of crisis."

"There is no other institution but the IMF likely to work on the linkages between the financial sector and the real economy, and that is really what today is to make."

If approved by the G7, the new guidelines could be in place later this year in an effort to avoid the kind of surprise losses incurred by many financial institutions when the US real estate market soured. AFP

Credit losses seen to go beyond $1T

SHANGHAI, CHINA—THE CREDIT CRISIS is far from over, billionaire financier George Soros warned Thursday saying regulators to move faster to contain damage from the collapse of the housing finance markets.

"I think the situation is more serious than the authorities admit or recognize," Soros told journalists in a conference call.

He added measures taken so far to slash interest rates and stimulate the economy were "necessary but not sufficient."

"Because of that, I think the situation is going to get worse before it gets better."

Soros is promoting a new book, "The New Paradigm for Financial Markets: The Credit Crisis and What It Means." He has urged regulators to move more aggressively to improve market oversight to curb risks from excessive reliance on debt for financial speculation.

He said he agreed with the International Monetary Fund's estimate of more than US$1 trillion in losses linked to the collapse of mortgage-backed securities.

Losses disclosed by financial institutions so far are related only to the decline in value of those financial instruments, Soros said.

"They do not reflect in any way a possible decline in the value of the loans held by the banks," he said. "We have not yet seen the full effect of the possible recession."

Soros and hedge funds struggling to clear up massive levels of debt are another pitfall.

"They are all now in the ... very painful process of wealth destruction," he said. AP

Asian shares mark third consecutive week of gains

HONG KONG—ASIAN STOCKS ROSE on Friday, with Japan's Nikkei up almost 3 percent, as chip makers extended a rally on expectations cyclical in the sector may soon end.

Asian shares looked set to post a modest gain for the week, marking a third consecutive week of gains, though trading has been volatile amid renewed concerns about a global financial crisis and a weakening US economy.

Oil prices continued to retreat from a record $112.21 hit on Wednesday, easing some of the concern in about inflation that had contributed to the rally in Asian bourses.

Prime oil had shot up to a record on Wednesday after US government data showed a surprise drop in crude oil and fuel supplies.

The MSCI's measure of Asian stocks outside Japan rose 0.7 percent as of 0630 GMT.

The index is up 0.5 percent for the week, extending a recovery that rose 8 percent or 19 percent during the previous two weeks.

Japan's Nikkei average gained 3.9 percent.

Shares in South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and India gained by around one percent each. The volatile Shanghai index was up 0.4 percent.

Gold prices eased toward $921.98/922.70 an ounce on Friday, a day after jumping to its highest level since March 31 at $928.40. Reuters

Manhattan Garden City offers super-charged amenities

As urban denizens become more discriminating in their choice of homes, the race for the property with the best and most charged amenities commences. Architects, engineers and landscapers of leading real estate developer Megaworld Corporation rise to the challenge with Manhattan Garden City (MGC). The garden-inspired development boasts of open spaces and manicured gardens and tranquil parks filled with tropical plants that serve as screens and buffers for privacy.

For the urban commuter, MGC also has thoughtful additions. All of MGC's residential towers are connected to the MGC Mall via a 720-meter elevated pedestrian walkway. Set to that crucial meeting in time simply by walking a few paces to the train terminals. The lobby will have a hotel-style, air-conditioned traveler's area and lobby ensuring safety and security.

Completing the merchandise list of amenities for each family member, MGC created places of leisure, whether active or passive, within the property. Active bodies and athletes-to-be will love the basketball court with risers/seats, 20-meter lap pool with a bubble pool and an indoor game room for adults and kids. A business center and function room will also address the needs of the busy executives within the area.

To foster a calm and relaxed lifestyle, passive activities such as yoga, meditation or simply reading books can be done at the sitting area, garden plaza, and fountain. Its verdant landscapes are ideal for a little quiet time, or a bonding session with the whole family.

Water babies and spa aficionados will love the outdoor spa, shallow water fountain and landscaped sun deck at Tower 5.

"At Megaworld, we strive to give our buyers the best by forecasting their needs. We want to give them the most complete amenities, so that all of their activities will be confined within MGC. It's definitely a super way to live here at MGC," said Megaworld Central Properties Inc. President Anthony Charlemagne Yu.

Find out more by visiting the Manhattan Garden City showroom conveniently located at the 3rd level of Gateway Mall. You may also call 09.8-5000 or email inquire@themanhattangardencity.com to make a viewing appointment.

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Lilia Cesar D. Mangosong

Study reaffirms new use for cholesterol-busting drug

By Charles E. Bahan

NEW FINDINGS from a landmark trial reaffirms that undergoing aggressive rosuvastatin therapy could reverse plaque buildup in the arteries of patients with evidence of coronary artery disease.

The therapy involved using a 40 milligram once-a-day dosage of rosuvastatin (Crestor) for two years.

The findings are significant considering that this is the first time a statin—chiefly used for lowering cholesterol—has shown regression of coronary atherosclerosis in a major clinical study.

Coronary atherosclerosis is the major cause of heart attacks as well as sudden unexpected death among otherwise healthy adults in the prime of their lives.

Regression proven

Proponents of the landmark trial Asteroid, short for A Study To Evaluate the effect of Rosuvastatin On Intravascular ultrasound-Derived coronary atheroma burden, were able to prove the regression using two imaging techniques called intravascular ultrasound and quantitative coronary angiography on which the new report is based.

Furthermore, this is the first time that QCA was used to demonstrate regression of atherosclerosis as a result of statin monotherapy.

The trial showed positive results. those who have taken rosuvastatin for two years were able to exhibit significant decrease in percent diameter stenosis (abnormal narrowing in a blood vessel) as well as significant increase in minimum lumen diameter (referring to the channel that makes up the inside of the blood vessel).

Cholesterol levels

Furthermore, the report also noted a 53.3 percent reduction in LDL-cholesterol (the "bad" cholesterol) level as well as a 13.8 percent increase in HDL-cholesterol (the "good" cholesterol) levels of the patients who underwent the rosuvastatin regimen.

Asteroid treated 507 coronary disease patients with rosuvastatin 40 mg a day for one years. The result of which was presented at the recent 57th annual scientific session of the American College of Cardiology.

Asteroid is part of AstraZeneca's (makers of Crestor) series of clinical trials—called Galaxy—designed to address unanswered questions from its statin research.

The Galaxy program has already enrolled more than 64,000 patients recruited from 33 countries worldwide.

Furthermore, these studies seek to validate the approach of targeting hard cholesterol and good cholesterol levels in order to unlock the buildup of arterial plaque, the fundamental cause of heart disease.

Division of labor

DISCOVER

Maxine Santos Ballon

SELF'S THE SELF-MAKING BEDSPOT OF mansion a bungalow, except that the mortgage supports don't help the bed frame float. Instead, they're attached to arms that can pull, tuck and smooth the sheets.

The prototype self-making bed received a lot of attention during the annual International Exhibition of Inventions held April 2-6 in Geneva, Switzerland. Italian inventor Franco Bertoni admitted he was inspired by his own laziness when it came to making his bed. He didn't mention how long it took the bed to make itself though.

Innovative products

Bertoni's invention was just one of the thousand innovative products featured at the exhibition. Other notable inventions included a suitcase that could turn into a desk, board-sheet with an office chair weaved to each one more, and a power strip that could monitor and control electricity costs.

The latter invention came from Korean inventor Jeongmo Lee and was awarded the exhibition's grand prize. The power strip could be linked to a computer through a USB cable and then any appliances plugged in on it could be tracked via computer program.

While visitors were roaming during Swiss Bio Research and Lee's to help save time and energy in the household, the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research released a nationally representative study detailing how many hours of housework were done by various members of the household in American homes.

The data were compiled from interviews conducted by the university-based Study of Income Dynamics, which has been gathering this information for 40 years. Researchers asked men and women to write down how much time each spent doing indoor housework duties such as cooking and cleaning on a weekly basis. Time spent making—or, in the case of a hefty bed, not making—the bed could also add up, depending on the number of people in the household. Chores such as home repairs, gardening or washing the car, however, were not considered housework, possibly because they are outdoor chores.

More hours of housework

According to the report, (though women still do more hours (17) of housework per week than men (13 hours) as of 2003, the division of labor isn't as skewed as it was in 1976. The data from 28 years ago indicate that back then, women averaged about 26 hours of housework a week while the men did approximately six hours of housework per week.

When the data were broken down not just by gender but by marital status, the Michigan study suggested that in 2003 married men and women were doing more housework than their 1976 counterparts. However, the study also indicated that married women were doing an additional seven hours of housework each week compared to single women, whose married men did an hour less than single men.

On a side note, it would be interesting to do a similar nationally-representative study in the Philippines to know how many hours single and married men and women spend doing household chores. A comparison of these results against the American data might present some interesting findings.)

Longstanding trend

The numbers might suggest that in an American household the wife cooks and cleans while the husband washes TV but interviewer-turned-sociologist and study director Frank Stafford noticed that the division of labor follows a longstanding trend.

"Men tend to work more outside the home, while women take on more of the household labor," he said in a statement. "Curiously, there are all kinds of individual differences here, but in general, this is what happens after marriage."

Stafford's comments may seem astute as sexist and depressing, but the US national study's definition of housework is indeed broadened. Duties may have skewed the results somewhat as well. If the study changed the definition of household chores to include outdoor tasks, which Stafford noted, tend to fall under male responsibility, a more accurate image of how American household chores are divided might be imagined.

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(E-mail the author at mcesar@inquirer.com.)

Executive checkup a valuable health investment

CAREPLUS

Christine F. Universo

THE BEST TIME TO GO FOR A COMPREhensive health checkup, doctors often say, is when you feel completely healthy. This piece of advice may sound unconscionable but, after careful consideration, actually makes a lot of sense. That's because some diseases provide no warning signs and by the time symptoms do develop a disease would have already been in its late stages. With early detection, there is a greater chance of cure—the best defense is an aggressive offense.

Many of us invest in stocks, bonds or real estate, hoping that our investments may dividends in the future. But none of these will matter if we are not healthy enough—or alive—to enjoy the fruits of our financial ventures. Indeed, a medical checkup is one of the wisest and most valuable investments a person can make.

A broad range

St. Luke's Medical Center offers a broad range of executive checkup (ECU) packages and wellness programs designed to provide corporate executives convenience and meet unique personal requirements. You may choose a program that establishes a baseline measure of your overall health or pick one that will focus only on a particular health issue (or issues) you are most concerned about.

If necessary, programs can be backed up by supplementary investigations. You may choose an outpatient executive checkup package or one that lets you enjoy a weekend's stay-in—or two-night stay at St. Luke's.

Comprehensive packages

Before starting in Hong Kong and now Singapore, Milward Brown's group account director Ad Tapinassa used to go to St. Luke's for his executive checkup. And even with her very hectic traveling, she still returns to St. Luke's. "It's more convenient and they have comprehensive packages that address my particular needs as a diabetic."

She says it's tough to get a complete executive checkup package in other countries, given the nature of their healthcare system. "Doctors [abroad] would refer me to one test and then another, and that's your next visit. I just like the comprehensive and customized packages at St. Luke's."

Great tech, great people

Stephanie Frasco, a regional director for marketing at Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD), says she goes to St. Luke's for her regular executive checkup because of the medical center's consistently high-quality customer service, cutting-edge technology and top-notch expertise. "You get the best of both worlds...great technology and great people!"

One time, Steph admits, she had an executive checkup "in a new medical center in the middle of Manila and [it] was dismayed by the lack of customer-focus there."

Steph describes her executive checkup experience at St. Luke's as very positive and pleasant. "A hospital [customer-care] representative accompanied me throughout the entire process and ably addressed all my questions.

"The staff gave clear instructions and explained what to expect during the diagnostic tests, including what I should do in case I felt any discomfort. And since I traveled directly after my checkup, it was very helpful to get my checkup results after only a day. I was happy with the overall service."

Asked whether she would recommend St. Luke's executive checkup programs to relatives and friends, Steph replied, "Absolutely!"

• • •

For feedback, please e-mail the HeadHunter Technology and Outcomes Information Bureau at tbgarcia@hsph.com.

Ontarget with high-risk cardiovascular patients

By Rafael B. Castillo, MD

CHICAGO THIS TIME OF THE YEAR usually buys a very pleasant spring temperature, and more than 25,000 delegates from all over the world, who scraped to this windy city last week, did not expect the cold, wintry temperature.

But the cold chill outside was not enough to cool off the heated debates and discussions of hot issues in the plenary halls. Probably the most awaited session was the presentation of the results of the landmark Durenger 100/group Telmisartan 80mm and its combination with ramipril (another blockbuster trial) by Dr. Salim Yusuf of the McMaster's University in Canada.

Ontarget brought some good news to high-risk patients, i.e., those who have established heart disease, previous stroke or other forms of atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, and/or diabetic thinkers, as we've written in previous articles, is already considered equivalent to the risk of someone who previously had a heart attack but is not diabetic.

Solid and several hundred investigators from practically all the continents of the world compared a class-and-tested drug (ramipril), belonging to the angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitor (ACEI) family, with the angiotensin receptor blocker telmisartan. They also tried to find out if combining these two drugs, as many practitioners are now inclined to do, would be beneficial.

Gold standard

ACE inhibitors have been convincingly shown in many clinical trials to reduce death, heart attack, stroke, heart failure, and hospitalization among patients with established cardiovascular disease and high-risk diabetes. Hence, it's called the gold standard in the treatment of high-risk heart patients. Anything in front of it must also be worth its salt in gold.

Ontarget results showed that telmisartan is just as good as ramipril but the former is better tolerated. We thought we could have the best of both drugs but combining the two didn't show any additional benefit. It only produced more side-effects.

This is a landmark trial in more ways than, according Dr. Tony Dans, other headed the local team of investigators that contributed more than 650 patients in this long-term trial with an observation period averaging 56 months (almost 5 years). This is probably the most meaningful of all the international trials we've participated in, said Dr. Dante Morales, who was also one of the major local investigators.

Good news

Dr. Gary Jennings, a well-respected professor from Australia, is currently in town for a series of lectures to discuss with local practitioners how and in Cebu the details of the trial which no doubt will shift the way doctors are currently treating their patients. ACE inhibitors, though proven beneficial for heart patients, can be tolerated in about a third of patients, mainly due to the cough or irritating itchy throat it produces. It's likely to be discontinued on the long term. Telmisartan is better tolerated on the long term.

The good news is that both of these drugs, which can add meaningful years to a high-risk patient's life, are available in our country. Practitioners need to alert their doctors if they're suitable patients for these drugs. Just like most potent and beneficial drugs, they have contraindications to their usages, and the doses have to be titrated carefully to the maximum tolerated dosage under supervision.

Telmisartan and ramipril were originally used for the control of hypertension, but based on the Ontarget study, high-risk patients, even though they have normal blood pressures, can benefit a lot from any of these two drugs. They're similar to statins, the cholesterol-lowering family of drugs, which also benefits diabetics and other high-risk patients even if their cholesterol levels are within normal ranges.

The study authors advised that "the choice between the two agents will depend on the preferences of patients and physicians and the individual patient's susceptibility to specific adverse events." Dr. Jennings stressed that there is no additional advantage from the combination of telmisartan and ramipril used in full doses in this population, so the combination has to be used with caution.

Ontarget was supported by a grant from Boehringer Ingelheim. The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario and a Senior Investigator Award from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, given to Dr. Yusuf, who is known worldwide for his breakthrough research.

FREE MEDICAL TREATMENT AND MEDICINES

The Philippine-Chinese Charitable Association Inc. led by Dr. James O. Dy, chair and president, recently dispatched its medical teams to the Chinese General Hospital and Medical Center to give free medical treatment and medicines at the Crossing Elementary School, Barangay Uno Crossing, Laguna. This is in response to the Laguna typhoid outbreak after more than 1,000 people reportedly fell ill because of typhoid fever. Seven Dy of the PCCAI, Sen. Richard Gordon of the Philippine National Red Cross, PCCAI Chair and President Dr. James O. Dy and the CSMMC staff give out free medication to the patients.

PROPERTY

Editor: Cesar G. Mangosing

Pinoy innovates, promotes value engineering

By Charles E. Bolton

VALUE ENGINEERING is often defined as the formal or informal attempt to assure highest value by delivering all required functions of a certain product, project, or process at the lowest overall cost.

And who would not love promoting value engineering, especially with today's rising price of construction materials, increasing labor cost as well as the need to have the structure finished the soonest time possible.

Here in the Philippines, this concept has several proponents, one of whom is civil and geodetic engineer, Jose Moreno of Jose C. Moreno Construction (moreno@builtrightnow.com), who is in fact been practicing value engineering for more than 30 years.

Moreno developed a system called built to order with or BOW building system, which is basically utilizing steel system made of regular bars manufactured into "built up steel

PHOTO BY C.B.

A RESIDENTIAL building that uses the BOW building system.

Manhattan Garden City
AT THE ARANETA CENTER

When leisure calls, follow your heart where it leads. To the one place where you forget all your cares. And where you escape to an extraordinary vacation experience any time. Manhattan Garden City. Rich in nature and filled with exciting options for relaxation and recreation. It's the ultimate urban hideaway. Here, your hectic schedule simply melts away—as you can live to have fun. At the fourth level podium deck, revitalize your body with the finest sports and fitness facilities. Unwind amid greenery, lush trees and colorful flowers. When the sun sets, head back to the comfort of your stylish home, be it an executive studio or a four-bedroom suite. And tomorrow, look forward to another rejuvenating holiday.

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The greening of hotels

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

Armando ab Arcos

MORE AND MORE FILIPINOS ARE now becoming tourists in their own country as they learn to appreciate and explore the Philippines' mountains, seashores and other natural vacation-ing of three-star resorts, which were once overbooked, are now developed and made accessible by developers who are operating very good business permits.

This is partly what accounts for the increase in hotel room values in just a billion-peso industry. In the process, visitors' accommodations in various home have sprung up from small pensions houses to state-and luxury hotels. After all tourism is one of the world's largest industries.

One of the biggest issues

Environmental issues are one of the biggest issues in the travel industry today. In fact it is common experience now to find a note in a hotel room saying that towels are not changed every day to conserve water. It doesn't bother hotels as those same guests in dressy hotels and resorts do not do the same.

Ecologically-conscious hotels have adopted other measures to ensure sustainability in the tourism sector. Some have recycling bins inside hotel rooms.

Housekeeping staff members are exposed to get common features and designers. They select supplies which are high environmental standards. Even the coffee included room mini bars is organically and shade-grown.

Hotel stationery and writing pads in many hotel rooms are made of recycled paper, and the management is pleased to inform guests, about that. Paperless check-in and check-out is being encouraged as many procedures can be done electronically.

The hospitality industry has taken on to environmentally-responsive culture, as hotel guests are to choose that simple steps have a positive impact on the environment.

Energy conservation

Energy is conserved by the key card system which automatically shuts down lights and air-conditioning when the guest leaves the room. Compact fluorescent lamps are choices in full use in most hotels.

Green design and project building consciousness are key factors that influence energy efficiency and comfort of hotel guests.

Some hotels abroad now offer eco-transportation and herbal cuts to incorporate green in their choice. They also have donation programs and give unused bottles and bar cans and old newspapers to local charities.

Walls of soft carpets and luxury drapery are dust collectors, and eco-friendly hotels pamper these guests with health-ier furnishings.

Using healthy sources of building materials for hotel construction is a given practice and one to embodied energy.

Getting down to how to build a hotel that use the resources and how it might be integrated on natural, its water and local energy profiles. Putting up a hotel in the middle of a forest is not ecologically sound.

Homeowners restaurant and management of elevated and rooms must be disposed are big concerns in the hospitality business today.

Green hotels

Hotels that reflect the local culture and spirit of the place are green hotels because they preserve the culture of the place and people.

In Bali, Indonesia, ecotourism concept involves the local community by hiring workers to maintain the traditional art works and craftsmanship used in the villas and interior furnishings.

In your choice of hotels it would be advisable to check out the green features and eco-friendly practices of hotels before making a reservation. Or, if you find that the hotel where you are staying lacks environmental consciousness, it will help all of us if you write a note and suggest to the hotel management to adopt environmental procedures and policies in order to be a green hotel. Any simple environmentally progressive have been proven to boost the bottom line.

For comments or inquiries, e-mail armadeabarcos@gmail.com

DANCING for monuments groundbreaking of Mosaic are financial engineer Rudel Bacaldo, vice president, Brittany Corp.; project architects Gary Cruzaldino and Willy Cruzaldino; Mark Villar, CEO, Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc.; Mosaic project marketing consultant Emily Lopez and Alliance's Legacy and Edwin De Guzman, chief shareholder Brittany Vertical Group.

BRITTANY'S Mosaic, the country's first designer condominium, elevates curvy, modern, luxurious condo living to new heights.

Brittany's Mosaic breaks ground at the Makati CBD

BRITTANY CORP. CONTRIBUTES TO makati as high-end condominium development in the country's premiere commercial business district with the groundbreaking of Mosaic at Greenbelt. As the Philippines' first designer condominium, Mosaic is located inside vicinity attractions in the provincial and prospective level of Greenbelt to well. It is Brittany's initial foray into the high-to-no-residential development market as well as its first venture within the Greenbelt commercial district.

A proud member of Vista Land & Lifescapes Inc., the country's largest home builder, Brittany is widely acknowledged as the most innovative developer and purveyor of luxury homes. This same expertise in creating masterfully planned communities is being utilized in the development of Mosaic—a project that will set a new Brittany's challenging spirit, uncompromising attention to detail, and unique understanding of market requirements.

BP's first designer condo

"Not only is Mosaic the Philippines' first designer condo, it is also the country's first high-end condo that applies the concept of contemporary, curvilinear lines and oversized balconies are also the customized and unique features of the project," Mosaic said he cares Handlifter Bacaldo. Mosaic boasts valuable SmartDraw Line filter ensure heard for the ceiling.

"These materials are durable and almost maintenance-free, simple and quick to install, and resistance to damage from temperature, fire, termites, water and severe weather conditions, while providing the toughness of wood," Bacaldo said. Unlike its other locally produced fiber cement boards, HardiPlank does not contain cancer-causing chrysotile asbestos fibers or respirable fine silica, making it safer for the workers and the household," Moreno explained.

He said for does-damage using wood, gypsum, or strandboards for the sur-rounding that they can easily be damaged by the elements if not re-serve.

"I believe with my BOW building system, I may be able to help create cheaper new homes, more high-quality structures, delivered at a much shorter time," Moreno stressed.

Continued on B/41

Greenfield district caters to emerging 24/7 market

THE CONCEPT OF GLOBALIZATION HAS caught up on most urban cities around the world, with countries working to develop that involve business transactions to-Forces companies located in different parts of the world—all happening in real time.

The Philippines is one country that has taken advantage of this development, mainly through business process outsourcing (BPO) companies that have outlasted the excellent communication skills and technological prowess of Filipinos. With their outstanding mastery of the English language among other exceptional skills, Filipinos have become a very viable pool of telemarketing professional working efficiently with key companies around the world.

Lucrative profession

Most college graduates and other professionals on transitional jobs now look toward the call center industry as a lucrative profession. And with the attractive salary packages, more young, mobile and skilled workers are encouraged to sign up to become a call center agent.

There is indeed a growing market for this batch of BPO-call center employees, and Greenfield District, which boasts as its area-served multinational call center companies such as Teleperformance, IBM Daksh and ANSI leads the shift-normal catering to the diverse needs of this emerging sector.

Dining venues

There is Eden Central Pavilion, which now offers dining venues that accommodate patrons at extended hours some even at 24 hours a day seven days a week. This encourages the employees to enjoy a comfortable working environment with their office hours. of just take Control, knowing that pockets of the free or night, they may find food outlets where they can relax and satisfy their appetite.

Coffee shops such as Starbucks, and popular food outlets like Chowking, Tapa King and Billows Restaurant are some of the places the three employees who seek to do dates from work every now and then. A sweet relaxing ambiance or a congenial meal will be the best for new hospital employees, especially on weekend and evening lounges or those dining venues, they can book-unique in-conversation with friends such as workers to while away the time. The mall likewise offers shopping and entertainment for the whole family. Activities such as cinematic drafts may open more time to relax pursuits.

Eden Central's dining destinations include Max's Kitchen, Mang Inasal, Chicken Inasal, Pizza Hut, KFC and the new Eden Central food court. There are also popular grill and food outlets like Sol's Steakin, Tu-Ego, Food Choices and Hamilton's Grill at Eden Central Makati complex.

With these establishments offering varied and flexible working hours to cater new wave of customers and communities to well as to establish investors and major infrastructural and revitalization initiatives are paving the way for the emergence of Greenfield District as the next important business district after Makati, Ortigas and Bonifacio Global City. Official Greenfield District is the newest urban type of Greenfield District's viability in catering to relevant needs of the mobile workforce and emerging companies where all essential services are at hand.

Greenfield District, owned and managed by real estate firm Greenfield Development Corp., is an expansive 24-hector commercial, residential, office and entertainment hub located at the corner of Edsa and Ellaro Boulevard.

EDSA Central Pavilion in Greenfield District caters to thousands of customers from all walks of life day and night.

Pinoy innovates, promotes . . .

From page B/40

volcanic and beaten" with an equal strength of Hinoki-fed stone in soil.

Sorting out

"I was able to develop the BOW building system in my quest to sort out practical solutions for construction problems—earthquakes and resisting fluvial field optimum value to a homeowner building his or her own house," he said. "It's possible for 'haves and need,'" the engineer explained.

Moreno has succeeded in designing a system that can build and finish a 72-square-meter, 2-storey high, masonry townhouse with spacious area in just 12 days and for only less than P600,000.

"In fact, a client was able to save at least P1 million for his three-story residence at Mission Hills in Antipolo City, while another saved at least P2 million for a two-story residential house in Cavite's Country Woods Malaya Village. On a much bigger project, another client was able to save at least P5 million for a five-story hotel building while another is set to get more than P10 million for a condo-story project located in cebu.

Townhouses

Moreno also reported delivering 16 units of townhouse 120 days (or 12 days per unit) for the GMA-7 Employees' Multipurpose Cooperative's wheat housing project, which is just the first batch of the envisioned 200 units located around Metro Manila.

"I was able to get the unit of my clients because my BOW building system offered the highest value for their money," Moreno explained.

He added that the system uses readily available lightweight materials with strength equivalent to or more than the conventional ones.

"These materials are usually 3 to 5 inch-angular-bars and purlins and joined by rusted steel bars to form 3 to 6 inch channels that serve as columns and beams. These are easily and quickly assembled according to the architectural plans of the house," he said.

Moreno explained further that concrete mix is then poured onto the channels and the flooring of the first and second floors, with rough finish for the first for ceramic tiling and rough finish for the second for vinyl tiles, eliminating the need for separate.

Afterward, the concrete formwork is then clad with HC panels—consisting of corrugated structural steel sheets sandwiching a compacted core of galvanized wire mesh—which are plastered with cement using galvanized basket spray for strong, fireproof finish.

"Soon, the roof is installed via steel purlins and the gutters on HardiFlex Iranpa fascia board; thus, leaving only the sides, partitions and ceiling still unfinished," he said.

Conventional way

The states as well as the sides and bottom are done the conventional way.

Moreno said the system is designed for the architectural plans of the house and he uses HardiFlex fiber cement boards valuable SmartDraw Line filter ensure heard for the ceiling.

"These materials are durable and almost maintenance-free, simple and quick to install, and resistance to damage from temperature, fire, termites, water and severe weather conditions, while providing the toughness of wood," Bacaldo said. Unlike its other locally produced fiber cement boards, HardiPlank does not contain cancer-

FIRST ones of townhouses Moreno delivered for the GMA-7 Employees Multipurpose Cooperative.

How to save on construction costs

BOW C. MORENO CONSTRUCTION'S SHELter-starter with BOW building system is about building structures done in a much faster, stronger and economical ways.

Engineer Bow Moreno suggests the following:

• Use steel for columns, beams and purlins as it will reduce the size of foundations by at least 30 percent because steel framing system reduces the total weight of a building by at least 40 percent. Moreno explained that this will help in reducing the size of the foundation and the smaller the foundation the lower the cost.

• In structural steel framing using the BOW building system, the frameworks and scaffolding which usually use plywood and coco lumber will be dramatically reduced by at least 80 percent compared with the conventional system.

• The BOW building system is faster to implement thereby reducing the cost of labor. Construction time is also reduced by as least 35 percent, which means the homeowner gets to move in much earlier or if it is a commercial building, the owner could recoup the investment much earlier.

• The BOW building system no longer uses expensive hoists and base plates on construction projects.

• With the BOW building system, the depth of beams and sizes of steel columns are reduced because the area will make a greater spaces and livability.

Keeping the summer cool with blue

DESIGN DIMENSIONS
Isabel Bermejo-Asuncion

SUMMER REMINDS US TO THE sea and offers a feast of iridescent blues for our eyes to feast on. It still amazes me at how colors of the sky change as dawn through midday and twilight, and create a spectrum of blues—from purplish to green-ish—in the sky and in water. Like other colors, blue can be perceived in an indefinite number of hues and blends where mixed with its neighboring—or opposing—colors on the color wheel.

Color in design relies on precision to achieve a certain effect or intent. The word "blue" immediately brings the Middle English, blew or blwe, an Old French term of German origin, meaning pale. The ancient Greeks lacked a precise word for the color blue and their closest description was a term used for dark blue created, tyanos. Greek poet Homer called it "wine dark," as he referred to the color of the sea.

Hues of blue

In our perception of color, the darker and stronger blues that evoke strength and security have often been presented upon as corporate colors and being masculine in character. Think navy and midnight blues.

On the other hand, the blues with tinges of greens and even violets are immediately associated with the colors of the sea and the sky. During these hot summer months, nothing is more refreshing than to see these shades of blue. Think Bora Bora, the Mediterranean waters and your very own backyard swimming pool.

The hues of blue vary as they are mixed with other cool hues on the color wheel. "Cyan" refers to the range of colors in the blue/green part of the spectrum, also termed as "aqua" or "blue-green." Turquoise and aquamarine are respectively a deeper tone and lighter shade that play on the hue of cyan. These are my favorite hues of blue as I find they are soft to the eyes.

"Cerulean" may be applied to a range of blues from a deep blue sky blue, a bright blue to a deep greenish blue color. "Azure" too, refers to the blue of the sky on a clear day and reminds me of the deep blue of the Mediterranean waters. It is synonymous to the main hue in the tiles.

"Cornflower Blue," a shade of azure, is a slightly washed shade of blue. "Powder blue" became the name reminded people of baby powder, refers to a very pale blue color. "Periwinkle" is a diminutive of the petrel shade of lavender blue, much like a pastel indigo, and to me, one of the freshest shades of blue.

AQUAMARINES work well with earth tones.

A touch of cool

In interior design, pastel blues need not be limited to conservative, Mediterranean or country concepts. In contemporary schemes, very light pastel-ish blues can seamlessly add a touch of cool to an all-white modern palette. The shade of blue that is almost white is the most refreshing of all blues and creates an airy feel to any space.

Toned-down shades of cyan work well with natural textures and earthen palettes. Aquamarines combine well with shades of taupe, brown and khaki for a friendly, relaxed, but very contemporary scheme. For an edgier look, splash on a strong royal, navy or electric blues on a palette of grays, gunmetals and black. Dark blues mixed with the icy blues create a cool combo and remind me of the shadow and deep waters of the sea.

This summer season, the emotional term "feeling blue" does not apply. In contrast to its connotations of loneliness and sedentariness, blue creates some very comforting palettes that during these days of searing temperatures, beeps us back to being happily refreshed.

Bright blues combined with whites and cool tones create a young, vibrant and icy cool palette.

A large number of amenities drive super sales of Manhattan Garden City

THE LARGE NUMBER AND diversity of amenities available at Manhattan Garden City have certainly made an impact with buyers and investors' appetites.

"We at Megaworld and our joint venture partner, the Araneta Group, are humbled by the tremendous public reception of our project and we are very proud of Manhattan Garden City's accomplishments as the No. 1 selling residential condominium project in the country today. The outstanding combination of its strategic location, the Araneta Center, New York-inspired design and numerous amenities has enabled us to launch Tower 3 of Manhattan Parkview Residences far ahead of schedule," Megaworld Executive Vice President Atty. Christianne Ty Ordoñez said.

Counting the sold-out first phase of Manhattan Garden City with its three towers, Manhattan Garden City is now in its ninth month and nearly about one and a half years since this residential enclave's introduction. With its outstanding sales, the second phase dubbed Manhattan Parkview Residences may thus break ground ahead of schedule as well, just like the first phase, according to Ty.

Manhattan Parkview Residence alone boasts more than 20 natural amenities. Tower 1 hosts a leather-ball court and bleachers so friends and family can cheer for more hoop action. A well-lined canopy walkway easily connects residents to the rest of Manhattan Garden City's amenities.

Tower 2 features passive amenities such as a sitting area, garden plaza, and bamboo. This Zen-inspired area is ideal for activities that require tranquility or reading books. Retreating to your iPod and meditation. This tower also hosts the grand function pavilion, which is the residents' main access point to their function units, and their main connection to the MRT and LRT1 train stations. Manhattan Garden City is the first and only residential condominium that boasts of a direct link to both train stations, thus making the whole metro readily accessible.

The third tower, which has just been launched, offers the most amenities among the set. Rooms with affinity for water will surely love the 20-meter lap pool with a bubble pool, outdoor spa, shallow water bar/lush and a landscaped sun deck. Toddlers will want to linger in the wading pool with a water play area and slides. "These water amenities will surely be enjoyed by the entire family, and this is one reason why Manhattan Garden City is selling so fast," Ty shared.

Of course, indoor amenities are not taken for granted in Manhattan Garden City. A game room for kids and kids at heart, a business center and a Function Room are also provided. These ensure that residents will enjoy doing business and interacting with their game partners within the vicinity of their homes.

To find out for yourself why many families have chosen these super amenities, please check out the Manhattan Garden City showroom at the 3rd level of Gateway Mall.

THE SMART CHOICE IN LAMINATE & POLYBOARDS
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Ayala's eco-sensitive family . . .

From page B3-4

children left in love and have them witness the release of the baby sea turtles.

Membership first

You would have to become a member of the Alviera Cove Beach and Nature Club first before acquiring residential lots at The Cliffside or the Seaside Villas.

A prospective member can also choose to build a home at the Alviera Cove's second neighborhood—the Mango Grove—which offers the highest elevation among all the neighborhoods. Alviera Cove's third neighborhood offering is the Wood Path with its resort ranging from 50-to-95 meters above sea level.

From the marketing pavilion where the Business Property is located, the Tarlac-Subic-Zambales expressway is just a few minutes away. Alviera is bordered by Zambales and South China Sea on the west.

Business Property was able to take the scenic trek with its winding paths and trails, and sure—aside from a flying lizard and a mockingbird—various medicinal and economic plants, which Ayala wanted to be preserved, swaying around trees and on pathways, and pinnate roots from centuries-old trees. It's the perfect place for deep-breathing, and you get to earn a "nature badge" after negotiating the terrain.

Alviera Cove is an additional 20 minutes' drive from Subic, and two-and-a-half hours from Metro Manila.

A couple of drive-time would also fetch you to Subic's duty-free goodies, and residents are encouraged to rehabilitate or preserve the rural gardens to inculcate in them a sense of ownership and responsibility for nature.

Preserve ecological balance

Future homeowners would definitely have to pitch in and preserve the ecological balance of these plots. Ayala's project planners have stressed. Though the project may have deliberately been executed for minimum environmental impact, a certain level of environmental disturbance, especially on the social roots, had been observed.

"Alviera" means family in Swedish. Thus, Alviera Cove is designed for the family and targets activities for children and teenagers.

Vigo related that local knowledge of Marung's long-time residents would be incorporated into the theme/experience. She revealed that a number of Alviera Cove's future guards were former fishermen, so they have a thorough knowledge of the coast.

She said that developing a technology park (an option mulled over before Ayala came in) with factories was "not best, per se, but if you look at this area (Morong), it's really best suited for ecotourism."

"This is a more palatable development in terms of perception of our locals because we really don't want our town destroyed by the influx of industrial locators," Vigo quipped.

TDM Hinaut, AVP and Head of Marketing and Sales of Ayala Land Premier

NATURE trails run aplenty in Alviera Cove's neighborhood where residents and guests can admire the beauty of Mother Nature.

THE SERENE surroundings make it the perfect summer retreat for those who truly want to relax, reflect and reconnect with loved ones.

MAGPLAN! Vigo (center), resident tour guide of Alviera Cove, together with Ebecker Uy, marketing officer for Alviera Cove, and Toru Hinaut, points out the area for future structures and facilities in Alviera Cove.

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PROPERTY

Ayala's eco-sensitive family leisure property bonds so close to nature

By Tess R. Salazar

CATCH GLIMPSES OF flying lizards, dragonflies and butterflies. Listen to monkeys chirp, and cheer on sea turtle hatchlings as they scamper from the sandy beach to the vast South China Sea.

There, you might still have some time to take your kids on a "flyby" through the lower or canopy level, 40 feet above the ground, zipping from tree to tree.

No, this isn't a Discovery Channel film sequence. This happens right inside an Ayala Land Inc. sanctuary in Batangas. Because—it is necessary to unleash nature to the area and a sanctuary is the lucky few who can afford it. One of its recreational uses learning area is a rare forest that functions as an eco-adventure backyard.

THE ONE-HECTARE multilevel pool has separate sections for swimming, sunbathing and lounging.

THE TANGSANG Bayawak (Pinis variegata) rises to water in its homologous room, releasing it back to the soil during the dry season.

ALI's first leisure community

Aurora Cove is ALI's first leisure community. ALI brands that it is an eco-sensitive development.

With joint development partner Isabela [illegible] company, ALI uses its characteristic elevation to create a master-planning a high-end community with Asian cuisine as the theme.

The developer has utilized the complete of a 3.05-hectare area of forested foothills sliding down from a backdrop of mountains meeting the sea for its Aurora Cove family leisure community.

Wanting it to be as less impact of a development as possible, the developer retained guidelines that would adapt to the natural lay of the land to create the preservation of wide open areas. The Cove is characterized by rolling hills of mango and cacao trees and bamboo groves. It has a peak elevation of 130 meters above sea level.

Ayala pointed out that it avoided tampering with the natural groves of mango trees during development even if the area offered tempting lease opportunities. Around the mango grove alone, a 10,000-square-meter Mango Grove Park was built to protect over 30- to 50-year-old mango trees.

Aurora Cove's latest exploration area was also moved further out, since the area originally chosen was found out to have nesting eagle owls.

And then the nesting grounds of sea tur-

THE PASTIME beach and waters of Aurora Cove serve as home to the endangered sea turtles or pawikans and other marine creatures.

Shout out for hatchlings

Security guards, who were the first to be assigned on site, were given additional training by the World Wildlife Fund and the Bantay Pawikan Inc, a community-based conservation center in Morong, on how to take care of the eggs left behind by the female sea turtles. The pawikan collect the eggs, sharing shell patrol, put them in a small hatchery, and after 40 to 60 days (depending on the temperature), they hatch and crawl back to the water.

Tiger mentioned how she was able to make all the forays members and their

(to guardian) also had to be "deconfined" (relocated for protection from potential [illegible]). Furthermore, on the other side of the cove, which forms a second cove, an elevated pool had also been declared a sanctuary of Philippine endemic [illegible].

"It's a good home. We got a lot of help from the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines in areas of identifying which species are here. The group also identifies which trees are their habitats. We avoid habitats identified," said resident tour guide Angelica Virgo.

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HANG WITH SUPER

Strike a post

by Yuki Diaz

page 01

Living offline

by James Cabrido

page 01

Careless whispers

by Monique Gallaga

page 04

Altar-native rock

by Katrina Ballaores

page 02

Midnight run

by Pam Pastor

page 02

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IAC INDEPENDENT ARTISTS CLUB

NOKIA Connecting People

By Katrina A. Holigores

Super Selects

The AltarBoyz: Jesus on Speed-dial

BOY BANDS. BASH bonding. Even at the height of their popularity (I just didn't get it. Some sounded) jeezy rain-shattered, although I admit when I did happen to catch a music video of them, I was pretty entertained by the marketing miracle that they were. I understand the attraction eventually when I saw the moves parodied to many a SNL-sugar shit, the choreography became iconic, the songs cheesily memorable and if you want sidewide participation from your peers, nothing unites like a boy band ballad.

So what happens when you throw God and his musical stylings in the mix? You get the musical, the Altar Boyz. Although the premise sounds preachy—all boy Christian band set to rock the devil outta you, the delivery was positively entertaining. The energy exuded from complete dance routines, comic timing and vocal blending by the five boys, namely group leader, Matthew (I Fi Valdez), 'sensitive' (guy in my books) Mark (Boy) Lonergan(on), bad boy Luke (Ryu), ham-fatah Juan (Jerk Madrid) and accidental-only Jewish member Abraham (Cheesy Mercado) was impressive to say the least. The opening act was greeted by screams from the audience and throughout the performance, bouts of laughter and applause.

Being a boy band on any comes with its setbacks, especially when on a mission to save souls. The tension between the boys was real, be it intuition, romantic or ego driven. Although the sound track is not one which is easily remembered, I could only hum a few lyrics and have actually sat down to write this review, I would only have a few lyrics and have actually walked out of the theater. The entire production was memorable, especially when audience participation was encouraged—even me you have to see it for yourself—it is a concert setting after all, and what's a concert without an appreciative crowd?

On a more critical note, I felt that some of the more poignant scenes could have been better executed. I don't know if it was because in some songs the mikes lacked power but there were times when a certain "oomph" or emphasis on a sung statement was left flat rather than uplifting or moving. Then again, the members are still in their teens, so perhaps the depth has still not been developed. Gerard Javier-in was most definitely Mark (yea the sensitive one) and kudos for him for playing up all his "sensitivities" to the audience's delight.

At the end of this musical, if your soul isn't redeemed, you can at least expect your spirit to be lifted.

Altar Boyz is set to catch Altar Boyz at Onstage Greenhill 1. Show runs until April 27 with evening performances on Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30 p.m. and matinee performances on Saturdays and Sundays at 3:00 p.m. Don't wait until the last minute! Buy and reserve your tickets now! Call Repertory Philippines at 897-0737 or log on to repertory.phil@pinoy.com for more info.!

GROOVIN' to the Gospel truth

Back into the groove

After a six year hiatus, Toti Dalmacion revisits his dance roots with 'Consortium'

[An exclusive interview with Toti Dalmacion, who's back in Manila's dance scene without "the hard sense in the mouth."]

By Adrian Cuenco

I HAVE A CONFESSION TO make. I have always been an admirer of Toti Dalmacion, the man behind Groove Nation and Tonic Recordings. Why do I need to make this confession? It is interesting to note that I was associated with the other prominent group that was considered his competition. During the competition years and in the Filipino club mentality absorbed some of us, he always commanded my respect. I share his passion and sympathy "hellos" that Manila deserves to hear much more than what is offered to us by our mainstream clubs.

Now, those of you who are impatient asking, "What am I talking about?" A short history lesson is needed for those who were not able to reach these parties that people used to call "retro" and to those whose house music initiation began with that 'Superclub' that people line up to.

Back in the day, which was considered early to mid nineties (at an electronic music was begining to carry into everyone's consciousness), Groove Nation, a small mail order record store located at the top of a building in Simonds Street in Makati, began organizing parties and events called "Groove Nation" at warehouses around the metro. Though, some were already playing and pushing house music, Groove Nation's parties were pushing the music further and flying in the innovators and the originators of house and techno. The parties were very memorable and some were just truly unforgettable with thousands and thousands of people dancing under one groove...filled me post mouth-hooray one.

Then around 2001, the sudden absence happened. Toti decided to focus on his Independent record label, Tonic Recordings, releasing albums from the cutting edge world of popular music such as Radioactive Sago Project, Imp, Up Dharma Down and the first album of a band called Orange and Lemons. During this time, the club scene had a huge transition all. Through most people did not notice the wind. I, and a few others did and are scared organizing our own events directly influenced by the 'Consortium'.

CONSORTIUM is a

Why is Warehouse 135 and not in Embassy or another club?

Even prior to me playing Ovie, I thought of all the supposed main second, Warehouse 135 seems the most focused on what is needed to be which was a home-fide "dance" club not a club that pretends to be "music" is the main focus of the club and it doesn't want to be like every other club in the country.

In your long absence in the club scene, did you update yourself in the local developments? What do you think it is now compared to before?

I constantly observe and it hasn't changed much. The only differences is, now, everyone is own house, or supposed to be into it like everyone was into trance in 99 onwards but it's still more on the commercial end and usually, while everyone claims to play or like house", when you hear them play or they let you hear what they have on their iPods, it's not really house. Either that or we really still mean dance music or house music but I'm a house/techno purist on the ubiquitous compilations like the "Cream" and similar hit type of commercial "deep house" style in Ratkade etc. So it's either people can't really tell the difference or are just being timid. Unfortunately, the crowd they're jumping on is almost 8 years behind. One can argue that it has improved but for me, it hasn't. The attitude and mentality has remained the same. The majority is still so close minded as before and that's probably also why we're going to try to come with Consortium. To give that option for those who want change and are open to new ideas in music and art. I know there's an audience out there who want more than what's given to them by radio and are discerning enough. I've seen it before my very eyes from 99-2002. There was an audience. They may have been the minority and those people may have grown old by now, moved abroad but that is why there's the need to influence the younger generation and build a new base that will help the growth in terms of appreciation and understanding of it all.

Why is the situation is not clubs like this?

Because we Filipinos are timid, more on the surface and we go with what's deemed by our society as what is "in". We're not critical. We're passive consumers who just say yes to what's being fed to us. We don't complain nor voice our opinions because it might offend etc. That's why people get away with murder most of the time. We don't describe for ourselves individually what we like and why we like something but we just go with the flow and there's always resistance to the unfamiliar—meaning not adventurous. Always playing it safe. In the local G's scene, that would be like playing anthems and familiar tunes throughout your set. Sons everyone's whooping it up and you're keeping the dancefloor full but if it's just the same music that they have on their iPods and what one hears in every hatchback South, South, East, West of the Philippines. One how would we propose it to be more discerning and sophisticated. I've said this time and time again and I sound like a broken record already. The argument thrown at me before is that a DJ is an entertainer so he or she should please the crowd. Yes, I really agree but what I don't agree with is that the DJ should make them (groove and insult their intelligence by giving them Bull, Mickey Mouse dance music and the top 20 favorites according to the commercial compilations. The crowd might as well bring their CDs and iPods and play it themselves.

Many say that Manila is not ready to dance to the music of Nathan Cohn or anything not mainstream, what is your take on this?

Don't agree. People always danced to Consortium... 3000-4000 people danced to the live techno house set of Pare Scissors, as well as relentless techno from Richie Rosario, Mimosa Barbara and picked on the house music of Derrick Carter, Dan Martin to Sneh and so on. That may not be a lot but that showed promise and showed there's an audience and ...they do DANCE. What Manila cannot dance to is if it's experimental or really just not danceable. Simple as that. That's the dilemma some local "Tito" experience because one, they're not DJs in the first place but building producers and music who enhance...to decorate what's the [illegible] what really sucks or [illegible] Then, the history of dance music. Think, disco, Hip hop—it just jumped on the bandwagon because it's the just because it's the and a music and the Funk compilation. Then, the [illegible] party at your cousin's where people grew and to "chika," [illegible] style is background. The of the reasons why and of these reasons that [illegible] lar ...to be safe which say that Manila won't [illegible] unfamiliar. We love me. In Consortium I have pointed out, [illegible] to be a problem [illegible] them. Again, it's not [illegible] them something as [illegible] Once can't [illegible] very accessible, it's [illegible] you move, be it a hotspot [illegible] walks trash. Hook, [illegible] Grand Theft Auto [illegible] and there [illegible] Nine Nines or something [illegible] nowadays. They'd [illegible] just have to have the [illegible] and maybe even go [illegible] to the crowd to [illegible] Just a thought. [illegible] as well by actually [illegible] more on the dancefloor.

As a DJ, you have [illegible]

Conservatorium
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SOUP

SOUPED up music

SUPER RADAR

Run An Earth Day Celebration" on April 19. This Earth Day event includes a talk by the eminent photographer Ronny Dizon with an exhibit of his work. Be inspired with a performance art show by premiere Hortus Siamosa and theatre artists Nonie and Shamaine Buencamino, sound designer Malek Lopez, and visual designer Wanis Barrios. Get a chance to win exciting prizes from top juniors John Pettyjohn and Iliga Bagsac, brass sculptor Eddie Ortega, mosaic artist Dominic Cardona, photographer Ike Lorenzo, accessory designer Anton Pamintuan, from personalities such as Maestro's famed bow guide Carlos Loobias, Chef Billy King, and also from celebrities friends Cesa San Pablo, Cesa Plaa, Sa Whenpen, and Pilar Aranjuez. Yes, it is in San Pablo, Laguna, an out-of-town road trip would be good for you. Don't be late, carpooling while fun and builds camaraderie in itself, also helps saves gas and the environment too. Tickets are P500 per person at Kanlay Salad, phone (2827) 772-6886 to (309) 373-8193, e-mail kasirnasalad@gmail.com or kasirnasalad@yahoo.com.

Information is subject to change without prior notice. For more information on events, log on to www.insight.rvl.com or pick up your free copy of 24/7 Montreal Bangalow at your favorite malls, bars and restaurants. We now also text 24/7 gigs to 2661 for Globe and Sun and 0961 for Smart. Submit your schedules before Sunday to sweetsiblings@24-7.ph and mag247@gmail.com for inclusion in the column.

BIG lifted by the heavenly sounds of the world-renowned **UMBC Children's choir** of Ecuador Filipino on April 13 and 14 at the PETA Theater Center (1 Epifanio de los Santos Ave., Quezon City). The concert is to raise funds for the restoration of the Lobos Church, a national heritage site, and to generate scholarship funds for those talented young children of Bohol. There are two shows for each day, matinee starts at 3 p.m., and gala is at 7:30 p.m. For more information, call 725-8244.

7 p.m. 8 p.m., Yoga Sweat Classes (sunday, April 13, 2008)
10 a.m. 11 a.m., Hatha
11 a.m. 12 p.m., Sikram Yoga
1 p.m. 2 p.m., Hot Flow
3 p.m. 4 p.m., Ashtanga
5 p.m. 6 p.m., Pilates
7 p.m. 8 p.m., Power Vinyasa (Ohm Flow)

EXPERIENCE learning from the masters on April 17, where eleven marketing experts converge to one for some private master's tips for those aiming to dabble / interact with the season pros at the **4th Market Masters Conference, 3 D's of Wine Creation: from inception to implementation** from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel-Makati. For registrations and inquiries, call Mon to Fri at 724-3400 local 732-2292, 727-1143, 410-0014 or email at info@marketmasters.net.

SEEDS and GRILL the mouth-watering goodness of the earth-friendly all-day vegetarian buffet at Romina Salad Restaurant in San Pedro, Laguna when it hosts "**Bicol**

...r' at Warehouse135 tonight

vinyl format despite the price to pay for it reinjected to a digital format. How long will you stay analog?

As long as I possibly can and so I don't see anything wrong with getting your tunes digitally as there are good sites for it. For practical reasons too more carrying a heavy record case and quality material is clear, cheaper tool but the fans remain, vinyl is still my version of choice because there's nothing like it and as long as there are vinyl releases, I'd still prefer vinyl, it feels and handles better. It sounds less unpredictable too imo).

Do we see the return of Groove Station? Are you going to throw more concert love in the future?

Ghostly yes, starting from that blacklisted launch. I'm feeling it at the moment; the last note has left my mouth. Timing seems right. Up till January I couldn't mind fancying to anything "mixed" but that's changed now. I'm about to go movie this again. Everything seems to click. As for Connections, it'll depend on how successful the 12th is, most likely though, I already have action lined up.

How can we change this?

The way to change is, although an uphill climb is just to keep at it and keep pushing the music and parties altogether. There are people out there looking for it and there people may be the minority but it can and will grow. It's better than just giving up totally because it seems hopeless. It's a dirty job but some people have to do it. You're not going to get an answer on a silver locks for your efforts but if you're really passionate about the music and you want to share it with your countrymen to uplift their spirits somehow through music, dancing and celebration of life, especially when everything seems downhill with this country of ours, then do something about it. It's bound to influence and touch somewhere. As George Clinton said "Free Your Mind and Your Ass Will Follow."

PIGGY BANK TRAVELS

Chilling out in breezy Baguio

Words by Oliver H. Palumbarit
Photos by Cerulean Kibbi Garcia

SESSION ROAD: A sea of old structures

Searching summer heat? Find your way up north and chill in Baguio

BAGUIO city at 5PM. Oliver and a view

AT BAGUIO THE CITY OF PINES IS still the place for that quick summer getaway, if you prefer something chilly and relatively familiar to escape your unrelenting humid metropolis.

Using Metro Manila as its own superior experience, prior to reaching elevated Baguio's comforting embrace, you get to see and cross provinces that you don't normally visit. Going southbound at night means that you get to see quiet, tranquil spaces lit by a few star-like lights in flat expanding darkness, too.

Interestingly, the metrocrawl at some less serviceable and improper places at certain provinces require you to pay a small fee—depending on what you intend to do—just like entry costs to enjoy Baguio. They're done, mostly, by barkadang na sporting "business" to announce by the door what's more getting used to.

Catching some Zs in the bus came in useful for this trip, especially when there's little else to do during the 6-hour plus ride. But once you set foot on good ol' Baguio, you can't wait to head on up to your hotel, have your rest, and re-acquaint yourself with the city. Session Road look like it used to, but the addition of popular food establishments common in Metro Manila makes it an architectural fusion of decades-old structures with contemporary commercial design. It's probably inevitable, but the change gives it a unique liveability.

Walking to the "C2 Explore" route at nearby Burnham Park means that you get to see more characters in the surrounding area. The Park, however, is still big and busy made lively by a wide assortment of visitors such as picnicking families, peddlers of trinkets and other souvenir items, relaxing tourists, and biking and skateboarding youngsters.

The C2 weekend event, which lasted till the late afternoon, attracted park visitors to the long-reaching series of activities. Geared to mark the improvement of "the body mind and soul," these involving presentations that lured spectators and enthusiasts all day long. Yacht upstairs were stocked. Generally, attended by the young and elderly alike. There was a pro-hip/hop workout led by a gifted, nimble dancer named Kimberly, who never seemed to tire. The party turn-out also taught participants the rudiments of belly-dancing in a separate, equally well-attended class.

At the C2 tent, where sudden gusts of nice-cool winds ushered in periodically visitors got to join different activities that catered to their specific interests. Classes for food/jewelry-making, sculpting and basket-weaving were held; attendees enjoyed getting informative lessons in unique manners that lasted a few hours each. C2 buyers got free license tattoos, too, for every purchase of the beverage.

The C2 Explore event successfully hosted (from Saturday afternoon, before a big dance presentation) the place. But the weekend route were ready and dressed up early the next day. The series of entertaining dance exhibitions proceeded as planned, like it never ruined.

The streets leading back to the hotel at Session Road were also bustling with different people, many of whom seemed to be walking to the various food joints, shop-shop stalls, or convenience stores. There were a number of art walls across the place, as well as comfy-looking restaurants that look like they've been around for generations. Again, the walking of the old catch the eyes of the area-cum-characters and it's easy to appreciate the different textures that the changing landscape brings.

Hailing a cab is quite easy, as they're pretty common in the area. Next stop: the hip and happening Arcadia Square, where the young and some young-at-hearts converged, dined and had fun. A few steamy bars and rooms staircased a wide courtyard that has tables for diners and drinkers. The Square accents a wide diversity that, judging by that part's clear Saturday night, included all persuasions and even non-Pinoys. The main room: if you fancy rhumpa-rhumpa house stuff, acoustic cover bands, or '80s-themed versions, there are bars or rooms there that have them.

The evening was a few times exotic and you could see your breath as a result, since the hotel's at the heart of Session Road, getting quick breakfast meals aren't a problem. After this Metro Manilan were discovered that, while most Old walls look and feel alike, Mt Pinos has the distinction of being the only one that has a swimming pool as open area there that gives visitors amazing views of the city apart from a pervasively cold breeze.

The morning that practically just popped into the west a holistic concept: rally the trip and down into over the high lights of Cliff week, definitely. Thoughts of going back soon and staying longer to literally drill out and explore the sights and sounds of Baguio lingered. The bus ride home allowed for views of provincial greens, gradually fading into darkness and getting lit by those city no-like, earth-based lights.

Live at the Ayala Malls

Alabang Town Center
Activity Center
May 1 • 4pm
May 2 • 3pm & 6pm
May 3 & 4 • 1pm, 3pm & 6pm
Meet & Greet at the Kids Zone
May 3 • 2pm
May 4 • 12pm

Trinoma
Activity Center
April 26 • 4pm
April 27 • 3:30pm & 6pm
April 28 & 27 • 1pm, 3:30pm & 6pm
Meet & Greet at the Kids Zone
April 26 • 4pm
April 27 • 1pm

Glorietta
Activity Center
April 18 20 • 3:30pm, 3pm & 6pm
Meet & Greet on the Teens & Kids Zone
April 22 & 23 • 4pm

Market! Market!
Activity Center
May 9-13 • 1pm, 3:30pm & 6pm

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Super

Of bytes and men

Is the war against techno-overload a scam? Is virtual interaction phony communication? Is throwing sheep truly harmful to today's generation? Let's analyze

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THUNDER ROAD

James Gabrille

EUROPEAN GERMS OFFICE: Blighted new continents and devastated populations wherever they spread. Now Western ideas, ideologies, and "memes," both toxic and toxic, are wreaking havoc on an unprepared world. If the golden arches, the cult of individuality, and the kudos of supernational capitalism keep spreading around the world, then we can expect more and more ecological and cultural disasters.

Virtual interaction has become a social lexicon to be reckoned with. The social networking site Facebook—founded by Mark Zuckerberg when he was still a student at Harvard—has an annual revenue of about $150 million, with more than 60 million users. Online romance sites fetch $500 million a year via services that range from the broadly targeted Match.com to sporadic sites like CatsAndSoup.com for high-earning but busy furry-preppers.

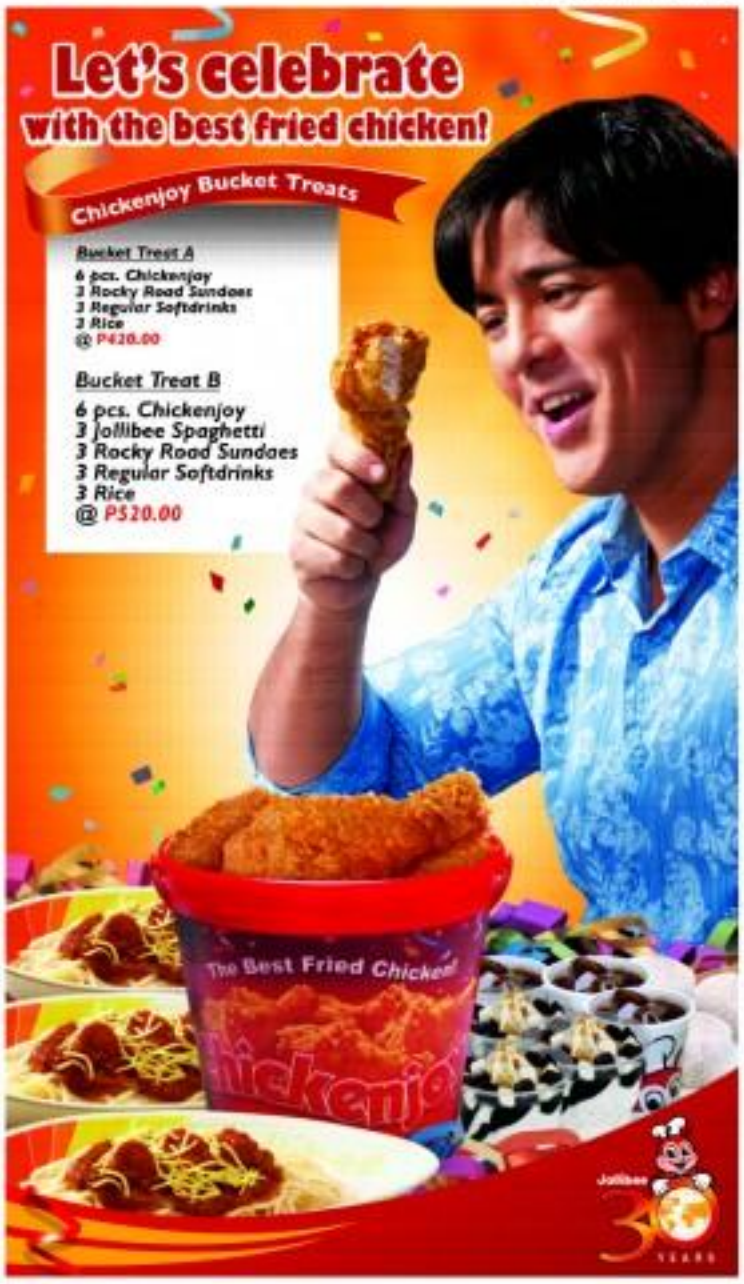
Meanwhile, MMORPGs (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-playing Games) like World of Warcraft (with 4.5 million subscribers) and Lineage (2.2 million) rake in billions of dollars selling virtual currency to groups of players who pay monthly subscription fees. These games, with their potential for mind-altering addiction, are responsible for much of the talk of "video game addiction."

Liquid love

So far as the influence of virtual communities has grown, a body of thought condemning its corrosive effects on society has sprung up as well, from both mainstream and academic sources. Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, for instance, sees nothing to be gained about in a tendency towards what he calls "liquid life," arguing that technologically mediated interaction leads to a fluid, detached relationship free from life's others.

"Virtual relationships ... are the pattern that drives out all other relationships," Bauman laments, with reference to internet dating. "They does not make the people who surrender to them happy. You gain something, you lose something else."

Bauman's reflections on the pernicious effects of mediation fit into a lineage of radical, Marxist-influenced



Racing with insomniacs

Ten teams, one night, six destinations, ten tasks, one phone. This year's Nokia race was shorter, more intense and still a whole lot of fun

T-SHIRT sale

SHUTTERBUG. Geoff Egerstrom

FRUITY. Team Culinary Queen

KATHY Meracanal Paolo Valenciano of Pet Plus

By Pam Pastor

I STILL HAVE A CLEAR VISION of myself lying on top of a grave singing 'O Lumapit Ka while my race partner Sonna Gonzalez-Alcuaz filmed me with her Nokia N95. In last year's Nokia Adventure Race, Urbanite first runner-up, I enjoyed myself immensely and didn't think twice when the opportunity to race came again.

This time, the race was to be held in the evening. Teams were set loose in the city with one quarter to their destination for the night. My partner was going for-mer MTV VJ and my fellow co-worker Geoff Egerstrom who I met only a few hours before the race. Our team, Music Fanatics, was competing against nine others—Team Conjuc and Ada Ladies (Unbeaten Queen), Asia Divas and Dadvalues Wang (Noelle Wendt), Alfred Vargas and Michelle Calimon (Vargas Up), Charlene Go and Andi Manzano (Hello Mavericks), Kathy Moran and Paolo Valenciano (Grand Yacht), Aaron Pinsonat and Sherwin Domingo (Arbiter), Tina Monzon-Cruz and Ramon Rodriguez (Free Spirit), Nikki Santiago and Jamie Rivera (Tiktet to Ride) and Thomas Cornet and Karylle (Femme Fatales).

On your marks...

The kickoff point was Jumbo Restaurant in Benas Boulevard. Armed with Nokia N82s and survival kits, we were all ready to go. At 8 p.m. (which was also Earth Hour), the race started.

Sarsleep Rivera gave the names the first task card. It read: "Need help? No trouble? Want assistance? Flex your drinking muscles and decode the Help Line Number below . Remember: no calculators and phones will be used."

Geoff and I ran to our van with our crew, ready to face the puzzle. It was not easy—not when you have equations like "MEMO: 30h + 24S / 2 + 97S1I – 109,989' and "33.3363 + 19.6437 + 6.1718 + 18.9282 – 33 + 28.312 + 22. 488 – 65 + 15.32587 = 12.47413 : 32" so solve each just a pencil and one sheet of paper. My hands trembled for the entire route. I am a complete idiot at math—thank God Geoff isn't.

Soon we were running back to Jumbo where we had to make a fruit platter. On our way in, I saw Alfred strolling down fruits.

"Oh-oh, I said to Geoff so he attached a mountain climber's safety knife. "Don't use too many fruits, we're gonna run short."

After having our photo taken on the second floor of Jumbo, we were back down because the task card read, "We must consume all the fruits of your hard labor." Geoff started eating the melons while I choked on the pineapples. I found the entire scenario hys-

NOCTURNAL scary

SET A CLUE. Team Music Fanatics

COSTUMED COUPLE. Jane Chua and Christian Wong

are ashamed to admit this but we found the song in Red Box's upstairs quickly because I know who sang that song.—Alvin Bridges

We finished the task quickly and were soon running down Greenbelt 3's escalators as we can jump into our van.

Our next stop was the Tiltan Project Store in Theobroma. Although we drivers had been given a suggested route, Geoff held him there was a better way to get to Pasig from Makati. The driver seemed reluctant at first—but when Geoff told us that his dad used to have a store there, we trusted his directions.

Soon, our driver was channeling Schumacher. He pulled up in front of Theobroma in no time.

We were the first to get to the TShirt Project Store. "With your 50g/2000 budget, choose 2 shirts and letters to make a statement. Use text describes the finest of the Night. Remember that you can't go beyond your budget," our task card read.

Say it with a shirt

While I was trying to think of something profound to put on our shirts, Geoff said something funny. I replied with, "Yeah! Insomniac ako!" He said, "Hey, that can be our statement!"

And so we started hunting for our letters and wishing them on bond paper so they can be pressed onto our shirts. A lot of by-standers were watching.

"Di ba si ano yun?"

"Oo."

"Hi-ano ito—ano yung theme." one woman said excitedly as if she was annoyed by our annoyance. Never mind me, lady. I'm just a nameless alien making freak.

Other teams were arriving as we ran to the other side of the store to have our photos taken. Our team was the first one out of the first ones out of there and we were headed for Eastwood.

Fire-dancing

Our task card read, "Look for the Pet Dancers and take their picture in different creative angles. Get your pet ribbon from your Race Marshal. Each of you must perform the dance for one minute straight. Take pictures of your partner during his/her fiery performance."

I felt my knees buckle. I cannot dance with fire. I am scared of fires—I can't even light a match, stick or hold a lighter.

But we had to focus on finding the pet dancers first. No wonder we had a hard time—we found the girls standing in a quiet corner, talking amongst themselves. The guys were nowhere to be seen. Turns out that we were looking for the girls prepared to dance. I decided to ask Geoff for pet pointers. Ehanes and zips do not mix. We took photos of the pet dancers, Geoff performed well and even had footwork to match his hand movements while I fumbled and laughed as the crowd laughed with me.

After my pet embarrassment, we used Pamilihan, a really cool feature of the N82, to take panoramic shots around Eastwood.

Then, we searched for the nearest value supposedly had one near close. That turned out to be one of our biggest challenges. We walked around Eastwood for long minutes and couldn't find the guy.

Missing mime

One stranger said mysteriously, "Sometimes they're in the station for cinema." But the guy was wrong. We kept crossing paths

ALFRED Vargas takes a picture of his team's fruit platter

GEOFF poses with his new shirt

GIRL POWER. Race partners Karylle and Thomas Cornet

with people from the other te who couldn't find the mime ther.

Geoff kept walking in a c corner of Eastwood. "No, the dead spot," I said. But the w was there—away from every else's view. In his excitement, off charged the poor mime to cheer and the stomach. I fun hand is to the mime...for didn't move until after we ene cher.

On our way out, Geoff saw acting skills, making Alfred have that we still hadn't been mime. But we didn't give it Mr walked straight out of t wood and they figured it Team Vargas up retraced steps and found the mime tar

Soon, we were in the ra the way to Pinikio where we to swim trunks and find five i ple to masquerade cancan p your suits down. There, U once against showed his fin finding people—he was the to find the last model who hiding near the rollers.

At Pinikio, we were headed more card. It said, "Hoo hoo! B our last. I however, encountered ra cast your vote ON POST to Hoodie at Serendra."

Soon, we were running Serendra. "Give me your b Geoff said.

"No," I said. I was out of br but I have asking people to o my bag.

I kept running, holding a my purse again so they wou fall off. "Give me your bag," t said again. I had to admit, Dolan backpack was showing down. I handed it to him.

I was red-faced and gasping breath by the time we reached Café Rockstar but I didn't cro cause we were the first ones t them. We read our last task c "Gap off tonight's amazing R has Adventure by telling a r using your photos of your ex experiences. Throw in some ric, add some graphics to m we have to send you've ge

We grabbed a table at a c corner and started to work. Jend's room arrived after a w and they too started working their slideshow. Teams arr one by one and the place sta welcome were packed.

Playing with pictures

We had taken a lot of phot every destination using the N camera which is equipped with Geotagging. Carl Orbe from te Steven Pinili. Using the N82's ers, we were able to create mini- from this night—ea down into mini-and adding fra thought bubbles and captions.

Alfred and Michelle beat t submitting the slideshow first gave ours second—with sli two hours to spare before deadline.

I was actually sad when we sadly handed in the slides

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Soon I was relieved that I could finally take off my nice shirt because it was a bit tight....but I had to much fun completing the links that half of me didn't want them to end. This year's race may have been shorter but it was definitely more intense than last year's.

The party

The race's final stop was Intramuros, where the Nokia Souls of the Night party was held over a week after we completed our last tasks. There, surrounded by people from Nokia, the PR25 staffers-coaches and their friends and friends, the awards were given out to the race participants. Arvel and Michelle were declared the Souls of the Night—they went home with the grand prize of P100,000 and a trip to Macau.

Geoff and I lost, yet, but the truth is, I still felt like a winner. We did pretty well all throughout the race, we fulfilled our plans of completing each task under 20 minutes and we had a blast. And losing this race means I can join again next year.

Now, the race was a chance to test the features of the N82 but it wasn't just that. It was an opportunity to explore the city while it's shrouded in darkness, to see how technology can bring people together, to push one's limits and fall in love with your city even more.

That is a huge prize to itself.

Souls of the night

LOKO LOCO. (from left) Peter Capino, Chelsea Capino and Jill Lujan

LOVE TEAM. Jane Chua and Christian Wong

ARE YOU MINE. Hosts Marc Nelson and Bernice Fernandez with N82 Ambassadors Cheryl Tan and Tommy David

TRIPLE TREAT. Bobi De Vera, Gift Rosario and Jason Duplito

THEY'VE GOT SOUL. Nokia Corporate Communications Manager Melissa Allen and Will Soriano and Coco Domingo of Globe Telecom

CHAMPS. Alfred Vargas and Michelle Cullotes with Nokia's Philippine General Manager William Haraldson Wijnia

SPOTTED. Paolo Valenciano and Karylle

GAMING MACHINE. Geoff Kganmann

Prize overload

THERE WERE NO LOSERS AT THE Soul of the Night party. The following prizes were given out:

Love Team Award – Team 2 Andre Jacinto (Jane Chua) and Christian Wong)

Breakthrough Performance in Pair Biking Award – Team 7 Vellaje Uy (Michelle Cullotes and Alfred Vargas)

1 N82 Booster Award – Team 1 Calcuary Quest 1 Tiwon, Coppar and Ado Ladaw)

Best I Love the Nightlife Comedic Pair Award – Team 6 Mookie Bautista (Charlene Go and Andi Manzano)

Breakthrough Performance in Pair Biking Award – Team 9 Gumel Turk (Kathy Mateo and Pierre Valenciano)

Best I Love the Nightlife Brave Sponsor – Team 3 Adventalk (Karen Policarpio and Silvio Domingo)

Best Soul of the Night Statement Award – Team 8 Mark Fanatico (Ron Jimenez and Geoff Kganmann)

Best Panoramic Photo Award – Team 4 Two Spirit (Theo Herrera Cruz and Ramon Rodriguez)

Best Pit Stopper Photo Award – Team 5 Ticket to Ride (Nikki Santiago and Justin Rivera)

Photographers of the Night Award – Team 10 Femme Fender (Theresa Daniel and Karylle)

Best Nokia Story Teller of the Race – Team 5 Ticket to Ride (Nikki Santiago and Justin Rivera)

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Of bytes and men

From page D3

European thought, from Paul Virilio's recent indictment of the real-time obsession with informational speed, which, he argues, renders thought impossible, to Guy Debord's apocalyptic reflections on the "society of the spectacle," to Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's withering attack on the Hollywood "culture industry" at the end of an incipient fascist consciousness. In fact, the critique of technology is such a pronounced motif in modern thought that one has to ask the question as to what ideological function it itself serves.

One thing is certain about many critiques: The Marxist modernist fear of technology has little to do with authentic Marxist thought. For Marx, technological innovation was always both bound up with exploitation and alienation, and at the same time a locus of radical potential. Its character is not static, and may even, because technology is a product of society and history in a fluid split by material interests.

Unless it takes this into account, the intellectual condemnation of technology becomes a case of cliché, symbolic, along banks with abstract concepts like "liquid life" rather than a specific set of social arrangements, perpetrated by certain kinds of people and thus soaking up radical energy that could be better directed. The ghosts of this type of thought is merely the flip-side of romanticist, which sees technical innovation as morally neutral.

Cultural health

A recent, vaguely alarmist New York Times article by Emma Gaydos underwrites the fear of virtual communities, arguing that teenagers who spend too much time online develop defective forms of interaction with socialization that is important to their emotional development. But it's important to emphasize that the problem is the users, not the tool. For other groups, particularly those with comparatively less real access for interaction, the internet often serves as a valuable conduit towards actual, committed relationships.

More importantly, in the face of ills that are undoubtedly society-wide, blaming technology is a diversion. Even if the dreaded notion of virtual relationships is, as Haughey argues, reserved to "symptoms of loneliness and depression," this leaves unanswered the obvious question as to what, then, the attraction is, aside from some mystical appeal of palpitary.

Is the popularity of mediated, "liquid" relationships a product of some primitive primordial condition? Or is it driven by concrete material pressures having to do with life in a corporate-controlled world: the overdeveloped individualism due to a product of consumerist consciousness; the lack of time by a real social life brought by relentless economic pressures; the stress with leisure time; the same time advertising's degradation of sexuality?

The former of these two explanations makes for better apocalyptic pronouncements; the latter, a better starting point for political intervention. The problem may be the message, as Marshall McLuhan liked to say—but it doesn't have the final word.

SUMMER Glau, very showy

Television's Rising Temperature

By Joana Manahan

SUMMER IS HERE AND well, it's really too hot to go outside. Unless your "outside" consists of a beautiful pool, bar cabana boys or at a gorgeous resort. There is too much point in getting premature wrinkles otherwise. Thankfully the people at AXN and AXN Beyond sympathize with my plight to stay indoors as they launch the much awaited "Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles" on AXN and the new season of "Supernatural." Take note, even if I was at a gorgeous resort I'd inevitably end up curled in front of the TV while slathering on the after sun...

AXN was kind enough to take me from staring at three stars on TV to my jaunt to Sydney, Australia where I got to meet Thomas Dekker and Summer Glau, the stars of "Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles" and (right) Jensen Ackles of "Supernatural" (not to my jaunt baby!).

Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles: They Are Back

"I'll Be Back." Perhaps the most famous movie line, ever. Before you go ahead and think the "Sarah Connor Chronicles" to be a cheap version of the Terminator trilogy, think again. The show is a completely different take on the Terminator film that follows a story and time line of its own. There is action, drama, lots of stuff breaking in entirely action-packed, but enough drama to make you fall like watching more every week. Thomas Dekker plays John Connor, for any teacher of mankind.

Summer Glau plays Cameron, the cyborg assigned to protect John Connor. She is the furthest thing from Arnie's muscle bound uncovered Terminator and really quite beautiful in person. Her looks seem to be mixed, but before we get her to the "she must be part Pinay!" category (as I attempted to do at the interview) she really isn't.

Both Thomas and Summer have to step into large shoes to make the Terminator TV series believable. Both actors seem to be cool and collected as they take on roles that would have potentially been clumsy, but have in fact turned it around and made the characters of the Terminator and John Connor their own. Thomas Dekker and Summer Glau were kind enough to indulge me with what the show is about, how Summer is the new Arnie and how Thomas Dekker's face is kind of a musician trapped in a hunky body.

What is the show about? Is it like F/X(the running in every episode)?

SUMMER GRACE: Me, too. I think that would get pretty boring. The films were about protecting John, about being on the defensive of those terminators. The show is about being on the offensive, where we are trying to stop this future apocalypse from happening at all. My character is preparing for a war, if they can't stop it. Our show is about their threats, and it's a very complicated road of circumstance that take place to try and put an end to this. It is a very complicated thing they are trying to do.

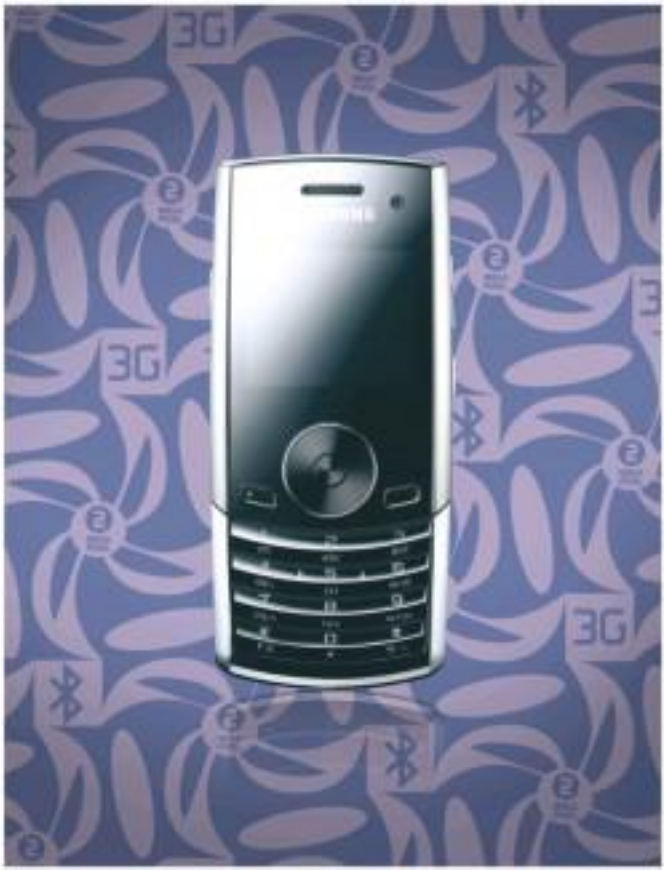
Summer, are you a mix of something, like from your parents?

SUMMER GLAU: Everybody asks me this and then they're disappointed with the answer because I'm just European. I'm a lot of people think Asian, or South American, or Hawaiian. I don't know what it is. My sisters, all three of us, look different. It is just something about my face that doesn't really look like my parents aren't telling me something.

What opposite to you about this character?

SUMMER GLAU: I have played very tall terrible emotional characters so far in my career. I thought it was awesome to be the girl on the scene who is not crying or falling apart. I love the action. Who doesn't want to play Terminator? I wouldn't pass that up. I have loved every aspect of playing the character.

The only hard thing is, being a recon



A diario wordless by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have and to hold

Art: ARNELA A. AVETRIA

A. LIPIN

BY JESS KRISEN

PUGAD BABOY

BY PH. JUNIOR

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHONGUO

KIKO MACHINE

BY MANNY ARRIOLA

SEH

BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

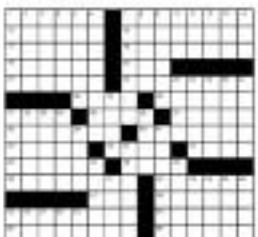
ACROSS

1 One of the Seven Wonders of the World
7 Mean-looking attitude
13 Tall wine, so to speak
14 Shelter
15 Clothes' neatness
17 Daily Bugle reporter
18 Appointed
19 Weather phobia
20 Pitch-thrower's need
21 TV journalist Jennings
23 Subjugates
25 Appeal
26 Bear necessity
31 Hubs' half
32 Christianity
33 Bluish
34 Tokyo, formerly
36 Clowns' performance
40 Sarcasm
42 Till to one side
43 Completely normal
46 Low-voiced refusal
48 Fish bait
50 Puny commander
51 Samantha's sister
57 Mary Poppins
58 Food
59 Preamble
60 Feminine deficiency
61 Lake Ladoga resident
62 Woolly Python troupe member
63 Hebrew monarch
67 Ready for anything
68 Pinnacle
69 Gangrene or hamburgers

DOWN

1 Arterial tube
2 Texas shrine
3 Piggybank filler
4 Hospitality service
5 Go downward
6 Fair-skinned enemy
7 French cheese spread
8 Subjugates anew
9 Symbol of fertility
10 Samantha sister
11 Boring entertainment
12 Hotel service
13 Punctuate
14 Actor Wright
16 Once in a while
22 Small gravel bed
24 Bathroom
27 Poetry or Japanese
28 Remainder of an estate
29 Remainder of an inheritance
30 Hawkeye's enemy
31 Wall Street's Bernard
33 Give the slip to
35 Fictional king
36 Bob's outrageous comment
37 Requirement
41 Ian Malkin
44 Liberate
45 Lasso up
47 Lupon Fe's partner
49 Move difficult
51 Gems
52 Hellenism
53 Period in power
54 Mother-of-pearl
55 Pork cuts
56 DCA button
58 Ask for it nicely
62 Dutch cheese
64 Sandwich cookie
65 Secretary's need
66 Cash container

By Tim Pinsel, Chicago, IL



Solution to Puzzle Posted

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

ARIES (March 21 to April 20): Some accounts may be in error and aware of the strengths of others. Today, Barbara warns you cannot if your words are unwilling to help them out. Beware sins of omission in practice and commission.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): It's time to feel selfless today. Maybe you're willing to help your fellow man, but you're not going to get your own needs ignored in the hands and wants of others. If you can help someone, do it.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You might not want to join someone else's cause or offer friends in order to promote a charitable cause. You're looking for ways to help others today.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): It can see that you're not always the best person to help others today. If possible, use your influence with other powerful people, you will be qualified. Only what you accept (also people).

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your ability to get things done is particularly heightened today. Get your priorities in order, handle others, manifest and settle. Unconventional ways the best. It is the world around you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You're willing to share with others today, especially someone you are romantically involved with. Reciprocate as others in no uncertain terms.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You're very sensitive to the needs of others today. Because of this, travel plans and close friends might want to confide in you. Say cause that you'll listen with a caring attitude.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You might have an opportunity to help a co-worker today. Do you misplaced with a co-worker to help accommodate. Work has priorities.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You are considerably creative today! Using played times with others. If you're alone, you're entertained. The entertainment world spells a life ark, you'll be pre-disposed.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): It's a no-no today for those you work with. Differences in feel today, especially about family business. You also might want to collaborate where possible.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your imaginations & fonts today! Your ideas are very creative, as well, needed or are to collaborate/working positively and of.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You're anxious, tempted to do something with something you're not sure of. Be careful with money today, you might be spent.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SudoKu By Dave Green

			8				4	
7		3	6					
		9				1	3	
							7	9
			5	8	1			
2	3							
	5	1				4		
					9	8		1
	4				7			

Difficulty Level ★★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	4	5	6	9	8	2	3	7
8	7	6	1	3	2	5	9	4
9	2	3	4	5	7	1	8	6
7	3	8	5	1	4	6	2	9
2	5	9	8	6	3	7	4	1
4	6	1	2	7	9	8	5	3
5	8	2	3	4	1	9	7	6
6	9	4	7	8	6	3	1	2
3	1	7	9	2	5	4	6	8

Television's Rising ...

From page 51

partner for my fellow actors. It is a very odd experience to have to be so placid, no matter what is going on, no matter who is crying, nor matter who is yelling at you, no matter how open someone else is, I can't give anything back.

When you do the action scenes, especially when you are running, you are not breathing or anything, is that hard to do?

SUMMER GLAU: It is hard. One of the things that I tried to incorporate from the very beginning was even making a blink deliberate, not blinking because I need to but blinking more slowly or else it looks more like a robot. And also Cameron wouldn't talk with her hands, Cameron wouldn't move her hair out of her face, or cross her legs. All those little things I had to strip away from being a human, and add it back in a false way, because Cameron is an intolerance and she isn't supposed to appear human, so everything has to have something deliberate to it has to go from the mind through the body.

Thomas, is your vein swollen or protruding as your on-screen mother?

THOMAS DEKKER: Absolutely. My mother has never been placed in the situation of murderers trying to kill me, unless you consider Internet bloggers that way. I mean from a very hippie family, all in the arts, and very protective and very maternal, so I identify with that. I think I also helps that Lena and I...Lena plays Sarah Connor — are inseparable. That, I think, makes it very easy to play that bond. My really close friends.

SUMMER: Oh, I know. Well, I'm glad if we're going to make a TV series about a termination. Arnold is such an icon and it seems that Terminator and Arnold Schwarzenegger are synonymous. It would be hard if we were trying to recreate a character like him. If we were replacing or we were bringing him aside and recreate to play the new Terminator, I think it wouldn't work. Its they went in the story from it so they could and get one. It's different. I think it was a smart decision because no one should ever mix Arnold. He should be left alone.

How is the dynamic of the set?

THOMAS DEKKER: It is really hard in group for people who haven't been there, because it's such a double serious show, and it's so miserable. It's a non-stop laugh factory.

Thomas, do you have any silliest production coming up?

THOMAS DEKKER: Yeah, I'm done one silliness. The first one made a really long time ago, before my fiction one, I wrote the pilot. I did that three years ago, I think I was 16 when I started it...and I finished it when I was 18. That is coming out really soon on iTunes, and then a store release. Then this now one I only did this year—2007—and that one is not coming out for a while.

So we can go to YouTube and listen to your songs?

THOMAS DEKKER: Yes. It's under "Music," "Myspace." It's really cool because it's really popular online. A lot of people don't know me as an actor, but have heard my music on someone's page. It's nice because it's not what people expect. When you are an actor/musician cross-over it's a little room, you know—and I think they're surprised that it's very European-electronica. I've been told that it sounds like Bjork and Nine Inch Nails. Those are the rare random

JENSEN ACKLES: Before all things that go bump in the night

matches and weirdos in closet from. So why not pick the hottest of them all? Jensen Ackles returns for the third season of "Supernatural," with a big change in his character's attitude. His clear blue-green eyes are enough to turn a monster into a bride groom. Why tell the ghosts and goblins haven't noticed his good looks, I still never know. How can you be scared with Jensen around?

Any new surprises happening in the third season that we should know of, that you can tell us?

JENSEN ACKLES: At the end of the second season there was a deal that was made, and so that really kind of puts it towards the third season, and it kind of switches up the driving force a bit. Now that Dean has been given a year to live, he's not as protective on standing to hunt down the ghosts and demons and spirits, and stuff like that. He'd rather pick up a couple of girls and drink in the bar and have a good time tonight... So it's interesting now because Sam is really the driving force behind where the two brothers are going and why they are doing what they are doing. And Dean is all the time saying, "Let's enjoy ourselves. Let's have fun."

Do you believe in the supernatural?

JENSEN ACKLES: I'd say that I'm a little bit more of a realist. I'd like to think there's a logical explanation for things that go bump in the night. I am not the first to jump to the conclusion "oh, there's a ghost outside the door," "there's a spirit in here," or "something's wrong." We probably the mind. It's probably the pipes. It's probably something else." But it is nice to know that it's [something, I know what to do.

Why do you think there's this renewed interest in television shows in the States that deal with this sort of thing?

JENSEN ACKLES: I'm sort of not a fan to the first season. I think this genre really kind of feeds off a few years back when the movies were coming out, when all these horror movies were coming out. There was The Grudge and others. You had all these scary movies coming out and people would just flock to the movie theaters to see this kind of thing. I think that is what really separated "Supernatural" from those other kind of monstrous shows. You've got "Ghost Whisperer," and you've got "Medium." Those are kind of supernatural shows.

What separated us from the pack was that we were more of a horror show. We were a very monster movie-y show. We weren't something that kind of left you wondering what could be out there. We showed you what was out there and we dealt with it. I think that that has always been the defining characteristic of our show.

Have do you want to be your signature calling card if you want to make a feature film? What kind of genre? That would be your calling card?

JENSEN ACKLES: It's a good question. I don't know if I'd want it to be my calling card, but I'd love to do a western. I'm from Texas.

Supernatural: Fighting evil has never looked so good.

With supernatural and horror genres becoming more and more popular, there are a lot of players.

THOMAS Dekker, matter of mankind

The science of playful music

WHEN ARTISTS ARE often asked what advice they can give up and coming musicians, they tend to say that what they do should be fun because it'll reflect on the songs they sing and in turn they perform onstage. For this featured band, they take means to a whole new playground and share their views with the Internet's favorite Nokia's Independent Artists Club (IAC).

Pioneered by Nokia, the mobile music leader, IAC is the hub in cyberspace for new music for fresh homegrown talents in Asia. IAC gives new acts the means to be discovered, through its exclusive IAC share. Thanks to IAC, these indie artists now have a shot at amplifying their music in cyberspace, climbing it to a wider audience.

This week Super1 and IAC trip on the indie-flexible playful music of Playphonics.

"If we're to look it up in the dictionary, plumbs is the antonym of sound and also it's a way of teaching children or beginners to read. We came up with the name Playphonics because making songs is like playing with words and music."

Playphonics has Rina Camacho on vocals, Hector Cruz on guitar, Steaville "Ethal" Clemencio on bass, and Godfrey "Siggy" Clemencio on drums. The band was started December 2005 but studies were their priority. "It was only till after we graduated in 2006 that we decided to give it a shot."

Playphonic's music is influenced by artists such as Incubus, Deftones, 311, Rage Against the Machine, Tool, Cookie Crisis, and some chill-out stuff like Infusion, Monster Asterisk, Bjork, Portishead, Zero-7, and oldies like Ella Fitzgerald, and Billy Holiday. "We really can't describe the band's music ... some say it's alternative, some say it's rock, and some say it's 'chillout.'"

To sample their music, their song "Rockstar" is their recommended track to listen to. The influences of each of the band members came out in that song.

Sing, Sign, and Share

"IAC gives Indie bands an avenue to promote music not just in the Philippines but all over the world. Where we signed up for IAC a lot of doors opened for us in the music scene."

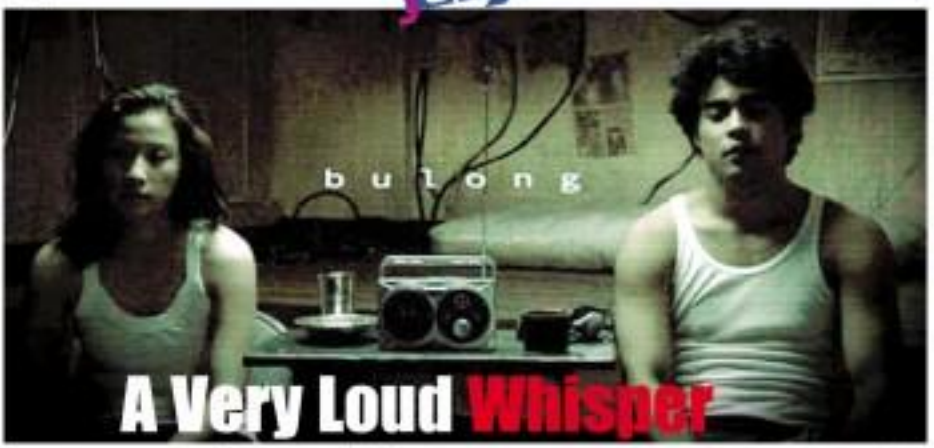
Catch Playphonics at March 20 at a homefit concert that will be held at the Music Museum. For upcoming gigs, you can look them up in Friendster or MySpace (playphonics.multiply.com).

Like Playphonics, sign up at the Indiepro dent Artists Club (IAC) to upload your songs, go to www.nokia.com.ph/iac/ and register.

Free Recording Sessions

Don't have a decent demo to send out in the musical big wigs? Nokia is inviting aspiring musicians to record their original music with the industry's best! Be one of the lucky 40 participants who will get a chance to be able to work with award-winners Louie Talan of Wonderwall and Pat Jallorina of Sexbomb Studios. Send in your rough demos, profile (including your influences) to Nokia IAC, 4th Floor, Philamlife Tower, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.

KEEP Playphonics on your playlist



A Very Loud Whisper

By Nanggs Gallego

THERE ARE A WHOLE LOT OF short films out there. Everybody wants to get into the actions of the big business of movies and commercials and for a lot of people, especially for students, it's the short films that's going to get them there. Within the five to 20 minute time frame, they learn to tell a story and, at the same time, wow everyone with their knowledge of the technical side of filmmaking. Sometimes, a short film is much more difficult to make because it requires more restraint from the director. How does he show more with less? It takes a true genius for story-telling to be able to know when they've shown enough to make their point without making it spoon-fed. That's why there is a tendency for a lot of short films to be flawed. That sort of occasion requires real artistry.

At the very local restaurants/bar/viewing room of Shagreal in Cubao Expo, UP film student Pedro Valdez screened his thesis film "Bulong" along with two other short films. Without a doubt, people were impressed. Within 20 minutes, budding director Pedro Valdez brought us to an alternate world. The film is believable cartoon fiction with amazing production design values and very edgy camera work. Looking at it, you believe that the world could exist. You are drawn in.

But more amazingly, the story is compelling. It's an allegory for the world today and with a definitive message. "The message, I felt was something that the youth, especially in the middle class needed to hear," explains director Pedro Valdez. "With everything that is happening right now, there's more opportunity for us to take action and take a stand, and there is also a greater temptation for us to watch from the sidelines. And the film, what I wanted it to do, was to speak to the viewers, the young people particularly, and say 'you don't have to watch from the sidelines, you don't have to conform, you don't have to sit back and relax.'"

Pedro Valdez is the director name for television host Joaquin Valdez who is enjoying the transition from in front of the camera to the director's chair. Not only is he enjoying the process, he is also finding joy in using more hands on in delivering the message. No longer is he the receptacle of the notes, like when he was the host, actor or singer, but as the director (and writer and producer), he is actually controlling how the message is being delivered. For his first film, he is showing great control, great precision.

So what does he think of the post-censorship? Does he think they're complacent? "Not complacent," he says. "More apathetic. They'd rather not. They'd rather not commerce. They'd rather stay safe. They'd rather let their parents deal with it." And he is also quick to say that he is guilty of this, as well, which is why he chose to do this film as a means to "correct myself, to police myself."

Rather than underline any sort of point that he wanted to make, Direk Pedro chose to set up interior situation with an extra resolution but never impresses his mind. That's what is so compelling about the film. We have to come to our own conclusion on what this film is really trying to say. While everyone at Shagreal seemed to have their own opinion, their own version of what went on in the movie, one thing is for sure, they all left enough space. And that's what makes a film a film. A movie is made people think.

"Bulong" will have additional screenings at *Pelli Books' Bonifacio High Street* on April 12 and April 19, 8 p.m.

MSA 2008 Summer Programs
College Entrance Tests and SAT Review
UPCAT
H.S. Entrance Tests
Academic Advancement Programs
Grade School
High School
Alabang | Makati | Fairview | Antipolo | Cainta | Cebu

Or how to transform an endangered analog object to accessible art

SOMETHING ARRIVED IN the mail the other day. And by mail I don't mean my e-mail inbox.

It was a postcard from Norway, from an old friend who had kept alive our past tradition of writing each other from our latest geographical conquests, even as we worshipped into the era of instant messaging and Facebook. A picture of a majestic, snowy fjord embracing a turquoise-blessed lake greeted me. I turned it over to find my friend's familiar scrawl in big letters, forming excited words peppered with smiley faces. The ink-stained postage stamp indicated that it was sent about two weeks before. It was like receiving a letter from the past. I peered into a framed window of picture-postcard-in-the-sublime moment, how if that isn't art, I thought, I don't know what is.

Truly, there are special things that are becoming lost in the gaps of the digital superhighway. Objects whose form has outlived its function, slowly gathering dust in the junkyards of our memories. If not for the collectors, there wouldn't seem be a place left in the modern world for such things as postcards and scented letters, mailboxes and stamps.

Is it possible to make these objects of the old analog world become relevant again in today's hyperdrive terrestrial? Yes, with a little out-of-the-mailbox thinking, for one edgy enterprise that recast transforming the medium into the message.

Freecard cult

YOCards is preserving the postcard by transforming them into accessible art and effective advertising tools. All over the metro, YOCards' stainless steel postcard stands display vibrant, pop art cards that are yours for the taking. The free, eye-catching cards can range from event invitations, cultural exhibit schedules, advertisements or socially relevant messages.

At the helm of YOCards is Kimmy Patiño, who herself began collecting postcards as a kid. When she moved to Singapore, she made a habit of grabbing free postcards to keep up with the city's events. She's kept all of the cards so successfully ever since.

Kimmy eventually noticed the freecard

PHOTOS ON P4

POSTCARD your personality

Araneta Center
Coca-Cola
PRESENT
100% Summer
100 VACATION PACKAGES
FOR 4 AT STAKE!
BUY COKE ZERO
SHOP, DINE
& DRINK COKE ZERO
FOR A CHANCE TO WIN 100 TRIPS FOR 4
EVERY P500 PURCHASE LETS YOU JOIN
FEB 18 - APR 30, 2008
SEE POSTER & FLYER FOR DETAILS
GateWay
MALL
FarmersPlaza
Farmers Market
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 62-0170 Series of 2008

Graphics Design/Editor Joshua Cardo

Where to Stop Where to Go

Waterfront Mactan spreads the Earth Hour message

EARTH HOUR 20 THE HIGHLIGHT OF A major campaign to encourage businesses, communities and individuals to take simple steps needed to cut greenhouse gas emissions and become more energy efficient. With its birthplace in Sydney, Australia, Earth Hour's concept is to deliver a dramatic message about the need for action on global warming by switching off non-essential lights and unplugging idle appliances for one hour.

This symbolic event was actively participated in by the Waterfront Airport Hotel & Casino (WAHC) on Saturday, March 29, as it signed up for the Earth Hour movement and created more dim moments to blackout. "It is an honor to be part of the solution to climate change, seeing that we many industries in the Philippines, particularly in Cebu, have chosen to take meaningful measures on the most significant issue in life on Earth. Being one of the first Cebu hotel companies to participate in this event, we hope to convince more establishments and, hopefully, more other businesses and households to strengthen the fight against global warming by joining this collective stand now, now and every year after that," said hotel manager Jennifer Mendoza.

At WAHC, initiated on the Earth Hour journey, switching off from 8 to 9 p.m. along with over 24 global cities, the hotel's lobby, driveway, parking areas, and waiting and dining spaces like Uno, Mirandela, Fishing Cabana and Cebu Kawa Town were added to darkness with only candlelight and good conversation as accompaniment.

Reservations for any Waterfront hotel may be obtained by calling +63 2 697 0888 or log-ping-cebu-waterfrontinsular.com.ph.

BRING ON THE COOLNESS AT ASTORIA PLAZA

Until June 15 you can treat your family to a hotel stay that will be memorable for a lifetime. Book at the launch of the newly refurbished suites at Astoria Plaza where the furnishings are a complementating mix of cool colors like deep brown, light green, cool blue and soothing beige. The hotel lobby has also undergone a makeover, making it an even cooler summer retreat. For only P5,400 + 1 pax night for a 1-bedroom unit and P6,900 + 1 to 2 3-bedroom suite, the special package is sure to bring the coolness in everyone. Children also receive a complimentary pass to Fun Ranch, a haven for kids to enjoy. For inquiries and reservations, call 687-1111 Astoria Plaza is managed with distinction by Seven Hotels and Resorts Corp.

Summer cooldown at the Malayan Plaza Hotel

THE MALAYAN PLAZA HOtel cools down the scorching summer with a soothing package. Book one night in any one of these: a studio-in parlor unit for P9,200 net, or a studio deluxe unit for P4,600 net, or a one-bedroom superior unit for P5,300 net, or a one-bedroom deluxe unit for P5,700 net, or a one-bedroom premier unit for P6,300 net, or a two-bedroom executive unit for P6,900 net. Rates including tax with welcoming tropical fruit shakes. Plus, you can also enjoy a relaxing in-room massage for one person free. Additional massages come at a minimal fee.

This package also comes with daily buffet breakfast, complimentary bottled water, daily newspaper, and this year of summer, access to pool and health club facilities. Valid from April 1-30, this offer is applicable only to local residents or for corporate accounts only.

Managed by Quantum Hotels and Resorts, the Malayan Plaza Hotel offers furnished studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom units with fully equipped kitchens, saloon, coolers and function facilities. Malayan Plaza rates are also equipped with complete living, dining and kitchen facilities.

For further inquiries, reservations and bookings, contact The Malayan Plaza Hotel at telephone numbers (632) 706-0000 / 8391-6034 Fax (632) 525-2969, online reservations sales@quantumresorts.com website www.themalayanplazahotel.com and www.quantumhotels.com.

A ribeye rendezvous at The Bellevue

[illegible] fresh Hass guacamole roasted [illegible] to your heart's desire, and [illegible] perhaps dent in your pocket at The Bellevue's main dining outlet Café d'Arte, the gourmand's destination of choice in the South. For only P1,500 net, you can have as much of the hotel's premium roasted ribeye steaks from the buffet selection we've all come to love, starting from the appetizers all the way to the desserts. Needless to say, one's stomach will be more than satisfied. Better yet, the ribeye alone is well worth the price of admission. Treat yourself and your friends to exquisite Italian cuisine evening with Asian fare on Mondays, an Indian buffet on Tuesdays, Japanese food on Wednesdays, Chinese treats on Thursdays and international offerings on Saturdays and Sundays. For the whole month, Café d'Arte will also be offering a bigger variety of your favourite Iberian ice items to complete your summer dining experience. To sweeten the deal, you'll even get one free buffet entry. Now you'll be a glutton for sure. Don't forget to complement the scrumptious food with a refreshing drink. Café d'Arte's circle of the mouth exists in a haven of tropical flavors of mangoes, kiwis and lengka that is topped with sweet whipped cream and is served with a free stuffed toy. So go ahead and treat the summer heat and bring your friends and family to The Bellevue. For inquiries, call 771-8181.

Batik and Cuisine: A Heritage of Indonesia

A GRAND CELEBRATION OF Indonesian beer cuisine, master and mature clothes as "Batik & Cuisine: A Heritage Of Indonesia" from April 17 to 20 will kick off with a fashion show by renowned Indonesian designer Adjie Notonegoro on April 16 in the grand launch of the festivities, presented by The Heritage Hotel Manila's owner hosted by Eddie Ilio, general manager in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia led by professor Rizal Sukma.

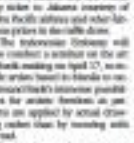
At the Riviera Café from April 17 to 20, enjoy lunch/dinner buffet and be captivated with the enlightened and lavish-scented gastronomic treasures of the Spice Islands. Here and get a chance to win a 3 days, 2 nights stay with breakfast for two at the Millennium Hotel, Jakarta and also round trip ticket to Jakarta via Philippine Airlines Pacific airlines and other fabulous prizes in the raffle draw.

The Indonesian Embassy will also conduct a seminar on the art of batik making on April 17, so-cable artists based in Manila to undertake Batik's intensive possibilities for avant- fashion as presents are applied by actual drawing cotton than by running with thread.

For inquiries and dining reservations, call The Heritage Hotel Manila at 814-0000 or e-mail our e-mail heritage@heritagehotelmanila.com.

Tropezz' refreshing treat

HOW DO YOU BEAT THE SUMMER heat? Tropezz, the Greenhouse Restaurant's newest addition, has come out with a scrumptious, soothing and refreshing dessert concoction, the Razberi-tation and Mint Is sorta. It is made with the freshest watermelon, pureed to get its natural juices, blended with mint leaves and flavored with fresh lemon juice. This delectable ice-shaved dessert is made by one of Tropezz's young and exciting chefs, chef Ivy Amanez, a 25-year old, graduate of Center for Culinary Arts, Manila.



Summer coolers at InterContinental Manila

IF YOU HAVE TO BE A COOL COOL PLANNER AT INTERCONTINENTAL Manila. Until June 15, local residents can avail of room-weekend packages on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays for as low as P5,000 net per night for single or double accommodation in a deluxe room. Package inclusions are a choice of continental breakfast for two at buffet or set menu at Café Jacques; a round of fresh fruit shakes for two at Bar / Deckhouse; 50 percent discount on massage services at the Spa; and free use of the fitness center and pool. Jacques and Bar / Deckhouse (Aqua Street Cafe), access to Gerry's Grill and free use of the swimming pool, and a chance to win exciting raffle prizes. One can stay in a Club InterContinental room and enjoy access to the lounge, full Club Lounge and all its perks for an additional P1,500++. Special rates for suites and Executive Living offered at P5,000++ for a Junior Suite, P5,500++ for an Executive Suite and P12,500++ for a Penthouse Suite, all night only, for aforementioned inclusions. A consecutive stay of two nights will entitle guests to a free dessert when they dine at the Prince Albert Restaurant. Reservations and inquiries may be made by calling 793-7500.

A new way to enjoy crepes at Crepe de Chine

AMASS THE RESTAURANT CRAVINGS, RENTAL OF SPACE[illegible] crepe station, after 12 years, Crepe de Chine has evolved with more savory dishes in the menu from starter crepes, hot crepes, and of course, dessert crepes. Sandwiches, pastas, and salads are now also part of the menu. Crepe de Chine does not serve traditional French crepe fillings which are usually savory, but it does serve Chinese, Japanese, or Filipino fillings. One can stay in a Club InterContinental room and enjoy access to the lounge, full Club Lounge and all its perks for an additional P1,500++. Special rates for suites and Executive Living offered at P5,000++ for a Junior Suite, P5,500++ for an Executive Suite and P12,500++ for a Penthouse Suite, all night only, for aforementioned inclusions. A consecutive stay of two nights will entitle guests to a free dessert when they dine at the Prince Albert Restaurant. Reservations and inquiries may be made by calling 793-7500.

Up for a threesome this summer?

IT'S SUMMER AND, LIKE most people, we all want to get to Boracay. But if the airfare isn't too expensive, it's the resort or hotel. Just the Tides and its' Philippines plans to change all that this summer starting this month all the way until the end of May. Not only P14,175 per pax per person, you get an fly-to-Boracay courtesy of Air Philippines and stay at the latest, most trendy of the new resorts in Boracay, The Tides for 3 days and 2 nights. But because this is the Threesome promo, a third complimentary night is being given away. So your four day vacation is pretty much all set, included in the promo is daily breakfast and roundtrip transfers via Caticlan.

The promo was launched last Feb. 29 at Cuisine where Ms Jessica Chong Jenkins vice president of administration of Air Philippines and some partners of The Tides such as Erik Cua, Stephen Ko, GF Reyes and Tim Wee celebrated this exciting new promo.

For more information visit www.tidesboracay.com or call 7293413.

GET SWEPT away by the Tides and Air Philippines in Boracay

A different kind of contender

COMEDIENNE TIM MANTY of the 'undoo event' fame has been brought in to perform something in Kitchenette by Antonio Tagaytay Rd. Air Makati City.

Dubbed "The Final Undoo," the special performance marks Manty's last public event before she goes on maternity leave.

Participants will be asked to do and say the original piece—something that involves the subject in respect and appreciation of the person—which they perform or do on their behalf or any person they select and send in video. The most funny will receive the prize, the words and the deliver will count. Special prizes await the best participants.

As an added trick, Boracay will be special performances by Boracay Experience, Alfred "Big" Tolentino, performance artist Cesario Ephera, spoken word aficionado Kristy Tan Chuseng, and Mikaela Kuizon. There will also be a musical performance by Ms. Manty herself.

Tickets are P500 per person and are available at Kitchenette, Antonio Tagaytay Rd. Air Makati City.

Intex makes a splash in the Philippines

Intex brings exciting new options to make a splash out of your summer. The American brand of premier above ground pools and inflatables introduces a wide range of products for the entire family to enjoy at very affordable prices.

Cool Pools

Intex's Rectangular Ultra Frame Pool Set revolutionizes the traditional concept of above ground pools. At 15' (L) x 9' (W), this 4.5-foot deep structure is perfect for taking a dip and playing water activities. Its wooden rectangular design combined with top-quality materials makes it the perfect pool to fit in your yard. The ultra frames are powder coated and galvanized to resist rust and corrosion, while the three-ply PVC super tough liners ensure durability.

All edges are rounded and smooth for child safety. Numerous support legs ensure the pool keep its weight evenly distributed while strong plastic metal sawy lock pins keep all the metal parts locked firmly in place.

This pool is available at selected Handyman stores at P89,088.75, but comes at a special discounted rate of only P67,500.00 from March 1-May 31, 2008.

Quick and simple to set up, two people can put the Rectangular Ultra Frame Pool set together in less than an hour. It comes with a 110 Volt filter pump with a free beralite tree added to the pack, a ladder, ground cloth, pool cover, deluxe maintenance kit including a surface skimmer and an instructional DVD. A volleyball set is included.

For classic beauty at a great value, the **Metal Frame Pool Set** sits at a diameter of 10' x 3.5' (H) and is available at selected stores for only P50,000.00 from the original price of P59,999.75 until May 31, 2008. Made of the highest quality, child-safe materials, this pool is the ideal type to take a relaxing dip in. It comes with a pool maintenance kit. A 15' diameter x 3' version is also available at only P80,000.00 from the original amount of P84,999.75.

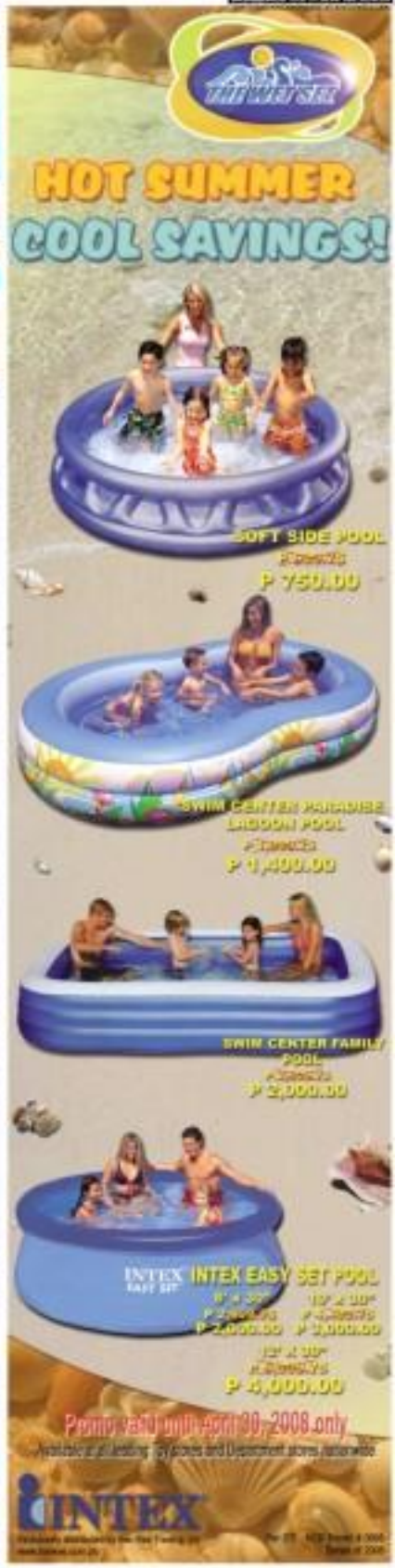
Intex also has a wide selection of fun and colorful kiddie pools, floats and accessories for children from one year old and up, available at leading department stores nationwide.

Easy wading with Intex pools

When the summer months hit, don't you just want to lounge around in the water all day long? If you don't have a swimming pool in your backyard to do so, Intex has an easy solution for you. Introducing the **Easy Set Pool**, the ideal wading pool for smaller yards. Compact and perfect for small families with very young children, it measures only eight feet in circumference and 30 inches in depth.

In fact, everything about this pool is easy. You can carry it home, and assemble or disassemble it in a matter of minutes. It's even easy on the budget, costing as little as P2,000.00, from its original price of P3,999.75. It also comes with DVD to show you how to set it up.

The Easy Set Pool comes in other sizes as well. 10' x 30" (at only P3,000.00 discounted from the original price of P4,499.75) and 12' x 30" (at only P4,000.00 from the original price of P5,999.75). All models are available at these special prices in leading department stores nationwide until April 30, 2008 only.



Postcards from . . .

From page B1

phenom in other countries as well, so she started to research about freecard companies in the US and Europe. She revealed that the worldwide postcard pop culture started in Spain, thanks to collector Xavier Buqué Nelles, who first founded Vanguardia in Barcelona. Vanguardia is **the first freecard company in the world.** In a span of 28 years, the concept has spread and influenced over 300 other companies in over 30 countries in the world today.

Kimmy eventually formed YOCards in March of 2007. Today YOCards distributes freecards to over 350 establishments around Manila. The response has been so positive that they've had to replenish the stock on their display shelves constantly. To celebrate YOCards' first year anniversary, they held a special exhibit at Fully Booked High Street showcasing Kimmy Paulino's personal postcard collection. **Over a thousand cards from all over the world were displayed,** creating a kaleidoscopic trip. I personally enjoyed the exhibit immensely, as I went through each of the cards, like little windows to the world.

The response was overwhelming, with followers, design students, artists, and potential clients flocking to the visual feast—proving that art enthusiasm is **alive and thriving in the city. There are** talents are foreseen in the future, which is good news to the young art/pop scene of Manila.

Kimmy adds, "through our postcards, **we hope to make more accessible to people as** they get them for free, see it around their surroundings and keep them for reference or appreciation." Beyond contributing to the art culture, she also uses YOCards as a way of promoting socially relevant causes to the public.

The best things in life are freebies

Meanwhile, I have my own theory behind the cardboard craze...and it has to do with the Pinoy's penchant for freebies. Miss Kimmy agrees. "We believe that Pinoys' quality of being 'freebie-obsessed' depends on the type of freebies they get. They have to see the benefit they get from it. Aside from its primary function as postcards, they're attractive, quick reference for any product, organization or event." Call them functional freebies, if you will.

Perhaps some truth lies to the old adage that the best things in life are free. In this case, it's backbreaking sucs of the G84 box.

Get you custom? Check out www.yocardsonline.com or www.postcards.blogspot.com

YOCards founder Kimmy Paulino

IN THIS ISSUE
■ 'Pinoy Idol' gets mixed notices /G4

SATURDAY Special
Editor Melanie U. Torres ● Assistant Editor Rito P. Asido

GOOD HEALTH IN EVERY CUP!

AGARICUS MUSHROOM: strengthens the immune, cardiovascular and digestive systems and helps alleviate liver disorders. SPIRULINA: more beta-carotene than carrots, anti-oxidant properties, provides iron, magnesium, trace minerals, Vitamin B12 and B complex. GANODERM: lowers blood pressure, balances good and bad cholesterol, lowers overall cholesterol and helps strengthen the immune system. KOREAN GINSENG: provides energy, relieves mental and physical stress, reduces fatigue, helps strengthen the pulmonary system.

Clooney finds dual tasks challenging

CLOONEY: The experience of acting and directing in the same time was an eye-opener

LOS ANGELES—GEORGE Clooney may be one of the elite Hollywood stars to have earned Oscar nominations for acting and filmmaking, but the iconic heartthrob is still getting used to directing himself.

After saluting out on a second Academy Award earlier this year for his performance in the Arab drama, "Michael Clayton," Clooney is back onscreen with his goldiron comedy "Leatherheads."

Screwball comedy

The film is a screwball comedy inspired by the raucous early years of professional American football in the 1920s. It marks a lighthearted change of tack for the actor, who has constantly secured acclaim for his performances in a string of weighty dramas such as "Michael Clayton," "Good Night and Good Luck" and "Syriana."

Clooney, 46, told reporters he had been keen to make "Leatherheads" in order to avoid being pigeonholed as a politically driven filmmaker. After "Syriana" and "Good Night and Good Luck," every project that came to me was 'issue-based. Everybody was happy to let me direct, but it was always political," he revealed.

Collaborator

"I don't want to be known as an 'issues' director because issues change. And, I have bigger interest in being a director. So, I wanted to do something completely different."

The actor had been made aware of the "Leatherheads" project almost a decade earlier, after being chosen the script by longtime collaborators, Steven Soderbergh.

Bringing the film to the big screen went on the backburner as Clooney focused on other movies before revisiting the script in late 2006 and reworking the story ahead of filming last year with a cast that includes Renee Zellweger and Jonathan Pryce.

With Clooney's character requiring him to be a number of physically demanding sequences, the star was also keenly aware of the months of time. "I'm 46. I realized if I didn't make this film now, I'm never going to do it!" Clooney added. "I was like, 'going to take heat-bed! This film thing, I got hit by a 21-year-old scrum partners—and it hurt!'"

Clooney said the experience of directing a film and starring in the lead role had been an eye-opener that he was unlikely to repeat. "By design, I wouldn't direct a film where I would play the lead role again. It was a hundred-per-cent more work," he recalled, citing the awkwardness of having to direct scenes, while starring in the same scene together.

Marvelous

"It's tricky because there's an enormous amount of anxiousness that comes into play," Clooney explained. "You're breaking the trust between two actors, particularly when you're playing the lead and directing at the same time."

"If you said I am doing a scene to-perfect, I'm not supposed to judge you as an actor. While a lot of actors will suggest how to do something, in principle, it's the director who performs that role! So, you're breaking the trust.

"As an actor, it's easy because I know what I need from a scene. But, it's embarrassing when you're sitting across from Renee and she's doing a fantastic job, but you know that the camera has come in too close, too soon—and you have to say 'Cut!'" AFP

Best Picture winner finally on view

By Nestor U. Torres

SADDEN: His wrong portrayal sweeps anyone with the stealth and lethal charm of a scorpion.

IT'S BEEN QUITE A WHILE, but "No Country for Old Men," which won the 2007 Oscar for Best Picture, among other honors, is finally showing in town (at Ayala cinemas).

At long last, more film buffs here will be able to find out for themselves why Uli Edel, screenwriter-producer that the Coen brothers' production was the best of a very good lot of Academy Award finalists.

Scene of the crime

The film is set in rural Texas, where a drug sale goes violently wrong, and a welder (played by Josh Brolin) decides to run off with the $2 million left at the scene of the crime.

He thinks he's gotten away with the unexpected bounty—until a hired killer (Javier Bardem), who turns out to be a psycho, steps in mercilessly pulling it (and him down). Providing a more "normal" context to the bizarre proceedings is the character of the local sheriff, played by Tommy Lee Jones.

Affirming the Academy jurors' vote, Roger Ebert observed in his review: "This movie is a masterful recreation of time, place, character, moral choices, universal verisimilitude, human misery and fate. It is also startlingly beautiful, stark and lonely...

"The movie documents how painful ordinary human feelings are in the face of implacable injustice. It's so flawlessly constructed that you trust those to simply continue, and yet, they create an emotional surface that draws you in the next scene."

Meditation

Peter Travers in Rolling Stone: "Mesmerized souls will tell you that 'No Country for Old Men' is out for blood. It cannot be exaggerated and unconcerned with the larger world outside a troubled town's suspicious pick. These people are dead, drunk and blind. It's an indispensable genre movie, a fiercely meditative issue work by the Brotherhood combo of America's Nikolaus for the easy fix. It's also an entertainment that refuses to be the oldest. What do the criminal sets of losers have to do with the life of the mind?

"Plenty, as it turns out! The film reveals a soulless America that is no country for anyone, never mind old men. Recent movies about drug have pushed hard to drive that growing dehumanization bothering our world. 'No Country' doesn't have to preach or wave a flag—it smiles in its frozen the face of what we've become."

Our view take [excerpts]: The Coen brothers' metal-straining film is a really scary tale that pits a number of fearsomely determined characters against each other...to the death... Bridle's such remains, played by Bardem, turns in a particularly riveting portrayal that creeps up on you with the stealth and lethal charm of a scorpion. Bardem's performance is so wrathfully effective that it should end up right up there with Anthony Hopkins' chaste reminders of Hannibal Lecter in "The Silence of the Lambs."

Villain

Like Hopkins, Bardem plays a evil without setting up a straw. Unlike how villains who eat up the scenery and mistake screaming for intensity, Hopkins and Bardem know that evil is enhanced when it's played so classier as a subtlety.

Aside from the lead actors, another character is "played" by the views himself. He is a calm, calculating man, yet he too reproduces hints of hope and despair, so he ends up (unfortunately) what drives the movie's protagonist and antagonist to their deaths in order to "reclaim" their lives.

It's the subliminal juxtapositions of the ordinary and the bizarre, so difficult to achieve, that the Coens have improved the Academy's vision to give the film their signature touch.

Fact, fiction fuse in tale of two sisters

By Noniel Tuvo

IT'S BEEN ALMOST 500 YEARS since Henry VIII and his ill-fated wives and the court, but Hollywood still can't seem to get enough of the Tudors. The most recent cinematic foray into the era of brocade bodices and flowers of London's underbelly is "The Other Boleyn Girl," a film adaptation by the best-selling novel of the same title by Philippa Gregory.

Both the novel and the movie are a loose—historians would say very loose—retelling of the tale of two sisters. The eldest Boleyn sister, Mary, who set both crowns by the ambitions of their father and uncle, they become the king's mistresses, competing with each other and getting mixed in the intrigues of a Renaissance court. It doesn't end well for either of them, though Mary at least gets to keep her head in the end.

Artistic license

Many parts of the story are based on events that are actually known to have happened. Anne did have a sister who was a mistress of the king, their family was really quite ambitious, and Mary probably did play a role behind the king's—and England's—breaks from the Roman Catholic Church. However, historical accuracy isn't an important consideration for the movie. Much artistic license is taken to make the story more dramatic.

Starring Natalie Portman as Anne, Scarlett Johansson as Mary, and Eric Bana as King Henry VIII, the film is directed by Justin Chadwick from a screenplay by Peter Morgan. While such big names, it's not unreasonable to expect great things from it.

The film falls short of being great, however. Despite the lush colors and dramatic chiaroscuro of its cinematography, the gorgeous costuming and the themes of love, ambition and betrayal, the production fails to engage beyond a certain level. In fact, watching it is like watching an episode on a TV series, but with better actors and props.

Disjointed feel

Chadwick's movie has a disjointed feel to it, and it isn't never to make up its mind about the kind of movie it really is. On one hand, it wants to be taken seriously, but on the other hand, it also wants its audience to enjoy it as if on a supermarket novel.

Many of the characters' motivations—especially Henry VIII's—are unclear and, where they're clear, they don't make sense. This makes everything hard to swallow, and only emphasizes the feeling that what you're watching is a glorified soap opera.

Portman and Johansson do what they can with their characters, and they each have memorable moments, but they can't get past the limited scope imposed upon them by the script. It's when Kristin Scott Thomas, who plays the girls' mother, and Eric Thomas, as the long-suffering Queens Catherine of Aragon, make their brief yet compelling appearances that you get a glimpse of the gripping movie that "The Other Boleyn Girl" strives to be.

PORTMAN AND JOHANSSON. Play siblings fighting over the love of their king.

POWER PLANT CINEMA

BIGFOOT – PG13
12:30 2:30 4:30 6:30 8:30 10:30

NORTON HEARS A WHO – G
11:45 1:45 3:45 5:45 7:45 9:45

MAN'S ISLAND – G
11:30 1:45 3:45 6:00 8:15 10:30

SEMI-PRO – R13
1:15 3:45 6:15 8:30 10:45

THE AIR I BREATHE – R13
1:30 3:45 6:00 8:15 10:30

THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL – PG13
12:30 3:15 6:45 9:15 10:30

1 ESHOW & SOUND PLUS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

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MMTA MOVIE GUIDE
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Taking spiritual responsibility

GREAT SAGES TAKE THE TIME of wisdom about their existence as living beings seriously. If you look at their lives, you'll observe that they take responsibility for their spiritual development.

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 Nim's Island
12:00, 2:00, 4:10, 7:30, 9:50

2 The Other Boleyn Girl
1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40

3 Semi-Pro
1:00, 4:10, 6:30, 8:50

4 Horton Hears A Who
2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30

Food's Good | Shutter

Shang's Kiddie Festival
April 18-20, 2008
Grand Atrium

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
THEATRE MALL
PROMENADE
MAHARAJA NI

Showing EXCLUSIVELY at Robinsons Movieworld
April 9 to 15
MTRCB Rating: R18
MOVIEWORLD

Lotus Pond

R. Valencia and S. Bernardo

They're individuals with external spirit souls who are accountable for their actions.

They don't identify themselves with temporary material designations. They don't subscribe to the false notion that "I am of this church and faith. I'm a member of the largest denomination. My family and church are both influential and powerful. Being a part of them gives me security."

The sages understand that no one is going to die for them, and nobody else will take care of their spiritual development. And if they will leave the planet alone, they should start living with a more responsible perspective as individuals.

Realization

As soon as a person is struck with the realization that the material body is temporary and that it has to be left behind sooner or later, he'll start preparing for that eventuality—and he'll cultivate his relationship with the Supreme Personality. Then, he'll become responsible, not just spiritually but also materially.

Winnie Cordero ...

Front page G2

The film stars Josh Donnemeyer and Marvin Madrigal.

Mall tours

Tomorrow at 3 p.m. at the Trinoma activity center, Gary Valenciano promotes his new "Rebirth" album. At 3M San Lazaro, Bandaya at Edgar performs cuts from its "Solid" album. And at SM Southmall, Mojo Fandales and his new band, Kenya, promote their "Endorsing" CD.

'Jessica the Hippo'

At 8 p.m. on April 28, National Planet premieres "Jessica the Hippo," a special which documents a year in the life of Susie and Shirley Jordan and their daughter Jessica—a one-ton hippopotamus!

On HBO

Tomorrow at 9 p.m., get to know the story of Manuel Quezon III and his family here, Johnny Manahan (Nicolas Cage), celebrity mercenary and stunt rider who sells his soul in the devil in order to protect his father and child-ren, and comedienne Rita Magdalena.

On April 20, "The Pursuit of Happyness" exploits Will Smith as a down-on-his-luck young father who undergoes an ordeal to win a job, league while taking care of his son (played by Jaden's own son, Jaden).

'Vegas Cameo to China'

At 8 tonight, the National Geographic Channel telecasts "Vegas Cameo to China Boom Town," about the new bold look of casinos in Macau.

Negros Summer Workshop

The 2008 Negros Summer Workshop will be held from April 21 to May 17. It will showcase short films, commercial videos and theater productions created by students.

'Fisheye'

Celebrity's second album, "Fisheye," contains 13 original tracks written and composed by bandmates Lemuel Bolano, Toni Jarcopino, Alden Arcenas, Aaron Rodriguez and Jhon Quizon.

'Banggo'

"Banggo" The Biggest OPM Retro Hits" is a collection from with 20 smash hits—among them "Sarah Barongbahal" performed by Hotdog, "Tomorrow, Tomorrow" by The Boyfriends, "Pasayaw-sayaw ang Ulan" by the Apo Hiking Society, "Ang Aking Awit" by Rosa Gabriel, "Maitong Nobyembre" by Gary Valenciano, and "Yesto Ba Ang Tunay?" by Dianing.

The Click Five in concert

Riding high on the success of their album, "Modern Minds and Pastimes," The Click Five is touring here and will perform at the Araneta Coliseum on May 30. New vocalist Kyle Patrick, with a new dimension to the band's performances. Tickets are available at the box office and all Ticketnet outlets.

Bo at Captain's Bar

Maryknoll College High School Class of 1998 presents "Golden Classics," featuring Bo Gonzales with the Manila Philharmonic. Orchestra at the Captain's Bar of the Manhattan Oriental Mansion on April 19 to 9 p.m. Call 720-8888 loc. 2446.

SATURDAY Special

GI

Winnie Cordero...

From page GI

24-hour marathon, "Bicol Female Special" every weekend. Plus, you can now watch TFC@Ko live-action shows as early as 5 p.m.

From April 14 to 24, Sick will be showing a marathon of the best of "SpongeBob SquarePants." Catch the "Where's Gary?" special episodes on April 25 from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Also, mark out for the Nickelodeon Weekend Carnival at the Bonifacio Global City Open Field from 3 to 8 p.m. on April 26.

Movies on TV

ON HBO today at 7 p.m., "Drive Me Hedge." Tomorrow at 11 p.m., "Election." April 14 at 5 p.m., "Funny Farm." April 15 at 7 p.m., "American Dreamz." April 16 at 9 p.m., "Finding Forrester." April 17 at 11 a.m., "Christ." April 18 at 3 p.m., "El Dorado."

On Cinemax today at 3 p.m., "Dances With Wolves." Tomorrow at 7 a.m., "Breakfast at Tiffany's." April 14 at 9 a.m., "Annie." April 15 at 3 p.m., "The Lonely Guy." April 16 at 3 p.m., "Splendor in the Grass." April 17 at 7 a.m., "White Christmas." April 18 at 3 p.m., "Monster Sky."

'Sa Pagdapo ng Mariposa'

A special premiere of Will Fredo's "Sa Pagdapo ng Mariposa" plus a live concert will be held tonight at Bonifacio Greenhills.

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1	1 ASYLUM	2 MRS. ISLAND	3 DOOMSDAY	4 NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN			
GLORIETTA 4	1 ASYLUM	2 THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL	3 NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN				
	4 SEMI-PRO	5 DOOMSDAY	6 MRS. ISLAND	7 SHUTTER			
GREENBELT 1	1 ASYLUM	2 MRS. ISLAND					
GREENBELT 3	1 NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN	2 MRS. ISLAND					
	3 SEMI-PRO	4 SHUTTER	5 THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL				
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 MRS. ISLAND	2 THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL					
	3 ASYLUM	4 SEMI-PRO	5 SHUTTER				
MEGA CENTER CINE	1 POOL TO HOLD	2 STEP UP 2	3 SOLSTICE	4 MEET THE SPARTANS			
MARKET! MARKET!	1 MRS. ISLAND	2 ASYLUM					
	3 THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL	4 SHUTTER	5 SUPER PARALEGALS				
TRINOMA	1 SHUTTER	2 DOOMSDAY	3 THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL	4 ASYLUM			
	5 SEMI-PRO	6 ACROSS THE UNIVERSE	7 MRS. ISLAND				

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

Glorietta 1 Fashion Show
April 11, 6 PM, Glorietta Activity Center

Greenbelt
9 Photographers' Shared Moods Photo Exhibit
April 9 - 14 : Greenbelt 5, The Gallery

Alabang Town Center
Acoustic Series - Rico Blanco
April 19 - 6 PM, Town Plaza

Mega Center
Launch of Shades of Summer
April 11, 4:30 PM | Paseo Solano

Market! Market!
Automatic Center Appliance Sales
March 28 - April 13 | Activity Center

Christian Dior
Repertory Philippines presents ALTAR BOYZ
April 4 to 27, 2008
For inquiries, pls. call 867-3714 or visit www.repertory.philippines.com

Ayala Museum
Registration ongoing for Ayala Museum Summer Art Workshops
For more information, please call 757-7117 to 21 local 28 or email
museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org

Tri Nanna
The Natural Source Beauty and Wellness Expo
Get helpful tips and good buys to further enhance the natural beauty in you!
March 28 - April 14 : 10 AM - 8 PM : Level 7
Beauty and Wellness Expo 2008
A Healthy Lifestyle Exhibit
April 10 - 11 : Activity Center

Glorietta Greenbelt Alabang Town Center Mega Center Trinoma Tri Nanna

Liliw rediscovers little-known saint

By Bing H. Carballo

ON A TRIP TO LILIW TO VISIT a friend, we had the good fortune of meeting a parish priest there who was committed to continue what his predecessors had done in honor San Buenaventura.

Destined for greatness

Although little known in this part of the world, St. Bonaventure, Bishop and Doctor of the Church, was given his name by St. Francis of Assisi after his mother revealed that she felt her son was destined for greatness and good fortune (buena ventura).

A Franciscan, San Buenaventura did much for his Order—he composed "The Life of St. Francis" and assisted in canonizing the exiles of St. Anthony of Padua. When the Franciscan missionaries spread throughout the world, a good number found themselves in Laguna and Batangas, where they established mission churches like the ones in Majayjay and Liliw.

Liliw's current core parish, St. Philip Apostol, was drawn to the wooden image of San Buenaventura, which was rescued by his parishioners, Fr. Rene Ilagan.

"I was intrigued by this saint, who was attracting a lot of devotees. I heard stories about miracles, including one that had the statue sweat tears of blood before 120 Liliwnhin witnesses," he recalled.

Carved images

Fr. Philip discovered an entry "sermon" on a church booklet before a 1898 fire almost razed it, which described the exile of seven hewing carved images of San Antonio de Padua and San Buenaventura—both patron saints of the parish—crossing to their importance.

Another entry stated, "Es una imitazion, a calendo Juppuesti. Tears of blood were seen flowing from the eyes of San Buenaventura."

In honor of the dangers of once during talk of miracles, the priest nevertheless thought of providing the saint with his own chapel.

Altar

He contacted an altar maker and their sculptor, Peter Pamino, who was coincidentally in Liliw at the time, to build the altar. The chapel was opened to the public last December.

Due to the growing devotion to San Buenaventura, Fr. Antonio felt the need to have the Confraternity of San Buenaventura for Liliw's male residents to help maintain the chapel and to schedule. Turnabout discussions on the life of the saint are open to the public.

Granted intercession and requests spread quickly through word of mouth. San Buenaventura is no longer an unknown saint—at least, to Laguna and Batangas. Like how things were during Spanish times, San Buenaventura is once again commanding reverence.

* * *

E-mail: bhcarballo@yahoo.com

SAN Buenaventura has been attracting many devotees.

By Rito P. Asilo

'Nim's Island'

D: Mark Levin, Jennifer Flackett

S: Abigail Breslin, Jodie Foster, Gerard Butler

AFTER THE UNTIMELY death of his beloved wife, scientist Jack Rusoe (played by Gerard Butler) relocates to a deserted island in the South Pacific to avoid daughter Nim (Abigail Breslin), from man's inventive and imperfections.

Devoid of human interaction, Nim grows up relying on her uncharacteristically rich imagination—that is further feared by her voracious appetite for reading, especially about her literary hero, shy literary idol played by Foster), a fearless adult fictional adventurer conjured up by the imagination of popular novelist, Alexandra aka Alex Rover (Jodie Foster).

Keeping him company when her father is on the high seas to search for rare plankton are her adorable playmates, Selkie, Fred and Galileo...who happen to be a gracefully scurvy sea lion, a beautiful Bermuda dragon and a wise pelican, respectively!

However, when Jack gets lost at sea, Nim is forced to take care of herself and fend off "businessmen," who seem intent on "stealing" the island island hideaway! Alone, vulnerable and fearing for her father's life, she begs Alexandra—who has been emailing Jack for information she needs for the latest but much-delayed installment of the fictional Alex Rover adventure series...to help her find her dad.

But, Nim is unaware that the latter is not really the brilliant Jones-like hero she imagined Alex Rover to be, but a female writer, who's an obsessive-compulsive agoraphobic who hasn't left her San Francisco apartment in 16 months! But, when Alexandra realizes that the 11-year-old girl is all alone on the remote island, she musters the courage to run to the rescue—and offer the scared girl a helping hand.

Some scenes in the film, which is based on Wendy Orr's bestselling 2002 novel, are hard to believe: For instance, how does Jack expect his daughter to live if and when he passes away? And, in Nim's library, was "Elmer the Elephant" meant to share with the island "invaders," the enlightened yet dangerous, a volcanic erupting Whoa.

Fortunately, millennium Mark Levin and Jennifer Flackett manage to surmount the production's contrivances by delivering an entertaining, heartwarming, and visually excellent family adventure.

Adding the story's laugh-out-loud and feel-good moments are the production's unlikely trio: Foster (in a very supporting role), Butler and the precocious Breslin.

"Nim's Island" doesn't just entertain—it also leaves a hopeful message: Nim, Jack and Alex realize that love and happiness are best experienced when they're shared!

FOSTER AND BUTLER. Play novelist and scientist, respectively.

'Pinoy Idol' gets mixed notices

By Nestor U. Torre

AFTER MONTHS OF AUDITIONS and other preparations, "Pinoy Idol" finally saw the light of TV day last Saturday on UNA-7. The singing-lit's latest reboot turned in the well-done held in Mindanao, where thousands rallied in crowded, but only 39 got the juicy nod to move on to the semifinal rounds in Manila.

How well did the prospective singing stars do? Based on the audition excerpted on the show, the talent pool wasn't that impressive. Quite a number of auditionees had pretty good voices, but they were the usual gaga-pogi types routine and sustained some cringe-worthy vocal exhibitions, so the impact they made was minimal.

Auditions

The auditions held in Davao City were particularly disappointing. We've discovered musicality in that southern city, so we know that it has a deep pool of singing talents, but only a few outstanding vocal performances were heard on last Saturday's telecast. Why didn't a greater number of Davao's gifted young singers join the tryouts?

Like its American counterpart, "Pinoy Idol" is also going to be star-studded with some of its more "entertaining" auditionees, a number of whom have "unusual" stories to tell. Frankly, these ones, coaching or varied midnight soul to eventity. Only welcome after a while. They also encourage female auditionees to join the tryouts just to get their 15-seconds of unwelcomingly unusual "fame," and that can get to be a drag.

ALCASID, MAGKAMAL, TRACY. Hardworking, focused jurors.

We know that some viewers enjoy these weird moments because they make them feel smugly superior, but we wish that more TV time could be devoted to the really good auditionees.

What about the judges? Ogie Alcasid, Julius Magkamal and Wyngard Tracy work hard and see less flippant than some of the jurors on last year's "Philippine Idol" tilt, and that's all to the good.

Weird moments

But, we were a bit thrown off by some of the audition talents they found promising enough to send on-ward to the Manila semifinals. Were they being kind to start the tilt off on a pleasant note? That's OK as this period, but we trust that they'll raise the bar in succeeding sessions.

Speaking of tougher standards, Ogie and Julius are occasionally same, but it's Wyngard who's emerging as the tilt's resident no-nonsense defender of procedures. We aren't saying that he's "Pinoy Idol's" Simon Cowell counterpart, because he has his own style, but we wouldn't be surprised if, as the search progresses, Wyngard ends up as the juror saying finalists how it—from.

Finally, what about show host Boy-ward Gutierrez? He's amiable and energetic, reads spiels proficiently enough, but he has yet to become his own person as a host, so his work on the program leaves a lot to be desired.

Self-confidence

To improve, he should acquire the self-confidence to occasionally tease himself many from prepared spiels, and work on a more spontaneous, ad-lib relationship with the tilt's contestants and jurors.

Yes, this could be risky on his part, because he could sometimes end up with egg on his face—but, the possible boobooing could be edited out before the taped telecast is shown to the public.

It's worth a try, because the feeling on "Pinoy Idol" has to become more spontaneous, more real empathetic as soon as possible, or else it could be constantly tapped throughout the singing-tilt's run.

Monique appears with Oprah, other stars

TODAY IS EXCITED TO announce that Jennifer Beals, star of the hit Showtime series, "The L Word," will join the cast of "I to the Tenth" on April 12 at the New Orleans Arena.

"I to the Tenth" will be a star-studded performance that will close V-Day's two-day 10th anniversary celebration in New Orleans and will feature Calpernia Addams, Lilia Aragon, Stephanie Beatriz, Beals, Bree Butler, Glenn Close, Dido Cuevas, Rosario Dawson, Ani DiFranco, Robin Hayek, Kristen Kreptela, Christine Lahti, Melanie Lynskey, Liz Mikel, Doris Roberts, Jodie Sweetin, Mary Washington, Monique Wilson and Oprah Winfrey.

WILSON. Performs monologue in 10th anniversary celebration.

These women will join V-Day for a once-in-a-lifetime benefit event featuring performances of "The Vagina Monologues." A special one-woman monologue written by Eve Ensler will be performed by Oprah. The show will also feature musical performances by Beth Hill, Jennifer Hudson, Diamonte Neville and The New Orleans Gospel Choir.

Monique Wilson is going to do a monologue in Filipino, alongside Hollywood stars, Glenn Close, who will do it in English. Monique was personally invited by Ensler to grace the event.

Winnie Cordero for Ascof Lagundi

TO WINNIE CORDERO, Ascof Lagundi is a real success. The popular radio-TV personality-turned-tried a variety of herbals for good health, despite their unsavory taste.

Recently, another herbal medicine, Ascof Lagundi, caught her attention. Available in syrup (Bonbon and Menthol flavors) and tablet forms, Lagundi offers the potency of herbals in a form that's easier on the palate—and that combination of effectivity and flavor makes the herbal extract a big winner in Winnie's book.

Lagundi is one of 10 herbal medicines endorsed by the Department of Health. It is the main ingredient in Ascof Lagundi, and has been clinically tested to be effective in the treatment of cough and asthma. Since it is organically produced, it has no side effects.

Winnie says that Ascof Lagundi has made taking herbals more convenient for her kids, who no longer have to be forced to take bitter-tasting extracts. Now, they get the full benefits of the herbal product, with none of the distaste.

CORDERO. Effectivity and flavor are a winning combination in her book.

MONTAGE

Photo competition

Manila Broadcasting Company is executing a photography competition in line with the year's theme, Fiesta, scheduled from May 1 to 3 at the CCP Complex. The contest's theme is "Sayaw, Pahyuk, Indak," and the tilt is open to both amateur and professional photographers using digital or film-based cameras. Deadline is on May 16. For details, log on to www.mbcradio.com.

Anniversary concert

At 5 p.m. tomorrow, Concert at the Park at Rizal Park marks its 36th anniversary with a performance by the Central United Methodist Church Festival Choir.

Titled "Sacred Songs Invariant," the show has a varied repertoire, which includes classical sacred music, works by leading and Pajara, spirituals, contemporary Christian songs, and Filipino folk and pop songs.

'Birdcast'

Ruelan Salud in San Pablo, Laguna presents "Birdcast: to Earthday 2008 Celebration" at 3 p.m. on April 19, featuring a talk by wild bird photographer Romy Dolan, and a performance set collaboration with movement by Nimi, Shamanism and Dolphin Beatitudes, poetry by Serlan Cuevara, sounds by Malek Lopez, and visuals by Bhanu Reyes. E-mail: birdcast@gmail.com.

San Dance Showdown

West Negros University emerged as the Grand Champion of San Cellular's Dance Showdown held recently at The Paseo Center in Cebu City. As the ultimate champion, the school took home P50,000 in cash, plus P50,000 worth of sponsorship. Five colleges and universities from Cebu competed in the showdown's finals.

WEST Negros University in San Dance Showdown 2008's Grand Champion.

Runners up were University of San Carlos, followed by Cebu Institute of Technology.

All-winning groups wowed the crowd with their amazing dance moves. Nina, San Cellular's Dance Showdown host/emcee.

Asia Barista Championship

Philippine Barista champion, Vanessa M. Cuizon, will pit her skills against professional baristas from all over the Asia-Pacific region at the Asia Barista Championship from April 23 to 25 at the Singapore Expo, which is being held in conjunction with Food & Hotel Asia 2008, organized by Singapore Exhibition Services.

More adventure and action on Nickelodeon

Catch the magical new show, "Magic Beanchkeeper," on Nick Jr., M-W at 9:15 a.m. And watch out for the

SATURDAY Special

Janet Jackson is back on top with 'Discipline'

By Rito F. Avila

JANET JACKSON, MADONNA and Mariah Carey, the top female pop icons of the '80s and '90s, are still at it after all these years—and they're back with new projects to cement their supremacy on Billboard's music charts.

This week, Elvis Presley's durable chart records get a drubbing from Madonna and Mariah. Where "I, Mariah," Madonna's collaboration with Justin Timberlake culled from her 11th studio album, "Hard Candy" landed at No. 3 on Billboard's Hot 100 chart, the Material Girl surpassed the King for the most number of top 10 hits...[see 2Nd]

But, Carey does even better. With "Touch My Body," the earlier track from her upcoming album, "E=MC2," she delivers her 18th No. 1 hit—a feat that enables her to take over the No. 2 spot from Presley for the most number of No. 1 singles on the Billboard Hot 100, second only to the Beatles, who have 20.

Milestones

Jackson's latest projects also mark a couple of milestones: "Discipline," the 41-year-old singer's 10th studio album, recently topped the Billboard 200 chart—her first No. 1 album since 2001's "All for You."

And, Janet's recent movie comeback, Tyler Perry's "Why Did I Get Married?," not only gave her a Best Supporting Actress trophy at this year's Image Awards, but it was also the third consecutive Jackson starrer to open at the top of the box office, following 1995's "Poetic Justice" and 2000's "The Nutty Professor II: The Klumps."

Predecessors

Like its predecessors, "Discipline" is a collection of exquisitely arranged, sleekly-crafted tunes and sexy, slinky harmonies. And, except for the unfortunate lyrical banality of the title track ("I misbehaved, and my punishment should fit my crime.../ Daddy, make me cry.../ Take out your frustration on me—"), and the blandly derivative "Greatest X," Jackson keeps the lyrical content and interpretive execution light, witty and flirtatious.

Beautifully arranged harmonies—a Jackson trademark—lend ease and elegance to the collection's dance tracks (the earlier single, "Feedback," "Rollin' (remix)" "Luv"), and his latest single ("Greatest Loverboy Go") populates the lofty-tech listing.

Top picks

Our top picks: "Can't B Good" is a sung reminiscent of "Twenty Foreplay" and Michael Jackson's "I Can't Help It"; the exquisitely phrased "Curtains" boasts of Janet's sleek, soothing vocals; "Never Loverboy Go" is reminiscent of "Anytime, Anywhere"; "Rock With U" has the soaring, optimistic spirit of "Together Again."

"What's It Name" is powered by a rhythm-driven groove; the techno-funk dance number, "Do Much Better," features mesmerizing melodic scrapefoil interjections; and the naughty song, "The One"—Janet's collaboration with Missy Elliott—is an unruly sumptuous cymbal-and-drum-beaten ode to the pop icon.

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1 FOOL'S GOLD	6 SHUTTER
2 NIM'S ISLAND	7 SEMI-PRO
3 ASYLUM	8 indieSine: KADIN
4 POSSESSED	9 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS
5 THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL	10 DOOMSDAY

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2 ASYLUM	6 SHUTTER
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4 DOOMSDAY	8 MANGKUNG PAPEL
5 POSSESSED	9 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS

METRO EAST

1 HORTON HEAR'S A WHO	5 SEMI-PRO
2 NIM'S ISLAND	6 10,000 BC
3 ASYLUM	7 DOOMSDAY
4 SHUTTER	8 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS

NOVALICHES

1 DOOMSDAY	3 SHUTTER
2 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS	4 10,000 BC

PIONEER

1 ASYLUM	3 THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL
2 NIM'S ISLAND	4 DOOMSDAY

STA. ROSA

1 UNTRACEABLE	4 SUPER FIGHTERS
2 PRIVATE MOMENTS	
3 THE MIST	
4 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS	

LIPA

1 HORTON	
2 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS	
3 P.S. I LOVE YOU	
4 SUPER FIGHTERS	

DASMARIÑAS

1 MEET THE SPARTANS	4 DAN IN REAL LIFE
2 SHUTTER	
3 DOOMSDAY	

IMUS

1 THE AIR I BREATHE	
2 DOOMSDAY	
3 SHUTTER	
4 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS	

ANGELES

1 FOOL'S GOLD	4 PRIVATE MOMENTS
2 KITE RUNNER / SUPER FIGHTERS	
3 OVER HER DEAD BODY	

TARLAC

1 MEET THE SPARTANS	
2 FOOL'S GOLD	
3 MY BROTHER'S WIFE	

STARMILLS

1 OVER HER DEAD BODY	4 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS
2 FOOL'S GOLD	5 HALF BLOOD SAMURAI
3 MEET the SPARTANS	6 KITE RUNNER

BACOLOD

1 MEET THE SPARTANS	5 10,000 BC
2 ATONEMENT	6 SLEUTH
3 ASSASSINATION of JESSE JAMES	
4 DOOMSDAY	
5 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS	
6 SWOL	

ILOILO

1 MEET THE SPARTANS	4 STEP-UP
2 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS	5 10,000 BC
3 DOOMSDAY	6 SLEUTH

Ramiele Malubay says bye-bye

MALUBAY. How even the prodigiously poised Filam "young musician" could win her.

By Nestor U. Torre

MANY VIEWERS HERE HOPED that Filam "American Idol" finalist Ramiele Malubay would "survive" at least as long as Jasmine Trias, who made it to third place in the singing tilt's Season Three edition.

After all, didn't the usually astute Simon Cowell go famously declare that the bright Bataan lad out of the three best singing voices in the competition? That unchronologically equivocal comment could go to a girl's head!

Viewers

Unfortunately, the show's viewers obviously thought otherwise, because Mr. Malubay said bye-bye long before the final field final been whittled down to three.

What happened? Another factor working in Ramiele's favor was how the prodigious young Filam "voting machines," the power of which was most dramatically proven four years ago, when it supported Jasmine till the very-to-third place.

So, how come this "musician" lost his power to easily this time? "Bluesy" is on Ramiele's post song choices, which made it difficult for her to showcase her singing talent at its best. Think how Filam fans must have remained loyal and supportive, but they weren't joined by many other viewers voters, hence her relatively early departure from the GS.

Another negative factor may have been the general lack of variety in Ramiele's performances in Season's performances week to week. Her style, impressive singing voice is impressive, but "American Idol" is all about evoking versatility, depth and range, and this is where "star" her couldn't compete.

Much of the time, she did not fly-flight variations on her usual singing style—and even her "look" in terms of clothes, make-up and hairstyle was too consistently "signature" to remain interest.

Life after AI

What's up for Ramiele now? Is there "life" for her after "American Idol"? Will she survive competitors like Jessica Phillips and Kelly Pickler and remain children-to-three clan of divas, "small" and talent? Or will she end up like other finalists like Kitty Lisa, Charles Ralphy Mitchell, Bradley and others who haven't been heard from much since they "disappeared" from the competition?

This early, things are looking up. Ramiele is providing as a member of 75 shows and will soon go on a performance tour with finalist's other Top 10-finalists. But, after that, what? It's key that Ramiele gets to cut no album—and there is becomes a relative fab.

To boost her post "Idol" career, Ramiele could also think of performing in the Philippines. Blasie fans here would be interested in seeing "star" her in person—and Ramiele's "cute" packaging should endear her to the "Bonbonnery" crowd.

Plum role

In addition, Ramiele can take lesson from the superstars of another "non-way-virus." Jennifer Hudson—who, much to her surprise, won over hundreds of other auditioners to clinch a plum role in the "Dreamgirls" film musical. Similarly unanticipated lucky breaks could also visit Ramiele's way, if her handlers cover all the bases.

On the other hand, Fantasia Barrino's case could prove cautionarily instructive in the opposite direction. "Ear Idol" winner also got to play on the person role in the stage musical version of "The Color Purple," but has been capped for reportedly missing spots a number of performances of the show.

Clearly, Dad's not the best to make important friends and impress influential people in US show business—yo, it's time! So our advice to Ramiele is decisively in order.

Chewy green mangoes

AMONG THE MOST popular Philippine products are our fresh mangoes. I have tried mangoes from different countries around the world, but nothing comes close to those from Guimaras and Zambales. They're the sweetest, juiciest and most delicious mangoes in the world!

WORD OF MOUTH

Sandy Lucas

I remember bringing fresh mangoes with me to Paris, which we offered for dessert in our restaurant. Because of travel restrictions involving fruit importations in most countries, many nationalities are no longer able to experience the unique taste of Philippine mangoes.

In Cebu—which is the #1 and Manila, one of the most popular drinks is our mango juice. Alternatives to squeezing the actual fruit have resulted in ingenious "concentrates"—such as juice and the mixed or double-mixed mangoes. We used to make mango tarts out of dehydrated mangoes—they just had to be rehydrated before consumption. For some people, it has become a healthy snack.

New product

Recently, I came across a new product from PCI Farms—the website states Ambassador Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., from whose farms comes the chief green mango. The moment I saw it on a shelf, I picked up a box and munched on it. It was delicious: chewy, mildly sweet and mouth-watering-tasty!

I don't know if this is something other nationalities will appreciate, but it certainly does wonders to those palates! Highly recommended.

Happy eating!

Email sandylucas@yahoo.ca

Fil-Am

... From page B4

have confided to me that they too have suffered a family member's death by suicide, but that they had not shared it with anyone outside the family. It's such a taboo topic, but survivors need to know that they are not alone—and that there's hope for a healthy adjustment to life.

In my speaker, I incorporate themes of cherishing loved ones and promoting the precious gift of life. My outlook in life has changed. It made me realize that my actions affect others more than I'll ever realize. This precious gift of life is so fragile—and it's something I should never take for granted!

E-mail rvmpeter_1586@yahoo.com, and read his blog, "The Maples Report," at http://blogs.inquirer.net/mapleswport

A diploma for Gig

MISS BICTENIA GRADUATED AT LA Salle-Zobel Ayala this year. Gig Robles, a graduating high school student from section E, fell from the balcony of Zobel Philippine Plaza in the wee hours after the graduation ball.

Marissa Ora, Gig's mother, has made special arrangements to receive her son's diploma. She noticed backstage. She couldn't bear to sit with the audience.

When Gig's name was called, she went instead up to receive her son's diploma. She could only muster a bittersweet "Wow" as Gig's classmates and their parents stood up to cheer for his. Then, she broke down.

Gig's moves on.

Gestures

The brave mother's show of strength wasn't easy. The unusual scene at the graduation ceremony touched a lot of people, but for Marissa, the gesture was meant to honor her son, because his diploma was something he had earned.

Admittedly, the event gave Marissa a sense of closure. Though still in the process of healing, she acknowledges that "Gig was never mine, because he belongs to God!" Her Catholic upbringing is giving her strength and support in her time of grief.

Marissa is an alumna of UP the College of the Holy Spirit and the University of California in Santa Barbara. In Cardiac, she built a library to encourage the habit of reading in the community theater, she says, should read in their children every night—even for 15 minutes.

Marissa and Gig were among our 33 Banners Photo Safari workshoppers last year. The participants were in the under-16 bill here as a show of support.

Their batch took it as a mission to beef up the children's library at the Seatown Village. So, if you have children's books to donate, you can drop them off at any studio at LSE, or you can arrange for the staff of Seatown's Village to pick them up.

* * *

Join the Banners Manila-De Photo Safari on April 25-26 and May 9-12. Email: manilabanners@yahoo.com, or call 894-2707. Take part in the Shell Photo Safari on May 23-26, with activities including Backsliding interaction in Bataan, Betty Boo-bing, underwearing and walking along Luna Balcony. Visit us at 4th, 2/F, LRJ Bonga Plaza, 2nd Shaw Garcia st., Bel-Air 2, Makati City.

STREET SMART

Mandy Navarrete

Fil-Am Ms America remembers departed brother

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

LOS ANGELES—"EVERYONE loved Mel," shared Angela Perez Baraquio-Guy, the first Miss American of Filipino descent, about her brother, Albert Baraquio, who committed suicide in 2006. As Angela and her eight siblings' way of dealing this, and to celebrate the universal importance of family, hope and faith in the face of this tragedy, they composed and executed songs concerning these themes in the CD, "Love + Found."

Springing from the Baraquios' heartbreaking loss, the album contains contemporary Christian music that they hope will be appreciated by listeners. Angela, who sang with her siblings at church, said the album's message is about taking care of each other. She was very close to Albert, her youngest brother, who was only 28 when he killed himself several days after his birthday in November 2006.

Information

In commemoration Albert's first death anniversary and birthday last November, the family released "Love + Found," a song that Angela sang and co-wrote. Lyrics of the song and information about the other 12 tracks in the CD are available at www.baraquio.com and www.silvermoonrecords.com.

Albert shared a room with Angela at the time she was crowned Miss American 2001—their sons have since they were! She narrated, "When I won, Albert was home alone holding down the fort. He was fielding congratulatory calls from people all over the country. He answered calls from many media outlets requesting for interviews. Albert told me when I called the house, 'A guy called up asking questions about you, so I talked to him.' I don't think he knew he was giving quotes for an interview, but I'm sure he answered them as best he could.

"Consequently, the writer's story had a lot of errors."

Understanding her final memories of her brother, the beauty queen revealed: "Silent was the one who introduced me to my husband. Mel and I met when we were both 15. Albert and Tim were after boys at our church in Pasig. At church, Tim never talked to me for three years, but he silently had a crush on me!"

First date

"It wasn't until my brother told me that Tim liked me that we went on our first date together—to the high school prom!" Winter Ball. Man, we've been married for 16 years, and we have two beautiful little boys. We always have fifteen to thank for that!"

Below is the second part of our e-mail interview with Angela, who's now based in California, where she and her husband run a business and office. Questions are in bold:

For the first time last Season, the family came together to perform the songs from the album. How did that go?

I flew to Hawaii with my husband and kids to perform the songs for the first time with my brothers and sisters. My husband and his brother, Tanuma, were also there to play music onstage. We had performances on TV and radio, and we gave newspaper interviews all week.

It was a challenge to relive the memories of Albert's life and death, but being together as a family gave us strength. In our down time, we got together for family dinners and celebrated our love for Albert and one another. It was definitely an emotional, yet cathartic, experience. It made a big impact in Hawaii—so many people didn't know our brother had died by committing suicide. The outpouring of love and support was incredible!

Most soothing

Aside from your sung contribution, what other tune in the album touches you the most? Which song feels most soothing, and which one puts a smile on your face?

The first time I got the album's master copy, I put it in the CD player, sat with my ears open, and listened to it from start to finish—I mean! the entire time! It is such a beautiful tribute to Albert's life! I missed my family so much, but just listening to the music reassured me to every single one of them, who were represented in the album. I also loved the fact that we all expressed our feelings differently. Basically every single song on the album is special to me, because they each invoke different memories.

The first track, "Just Another Day," which my sister, Tess, wrote, was the song that touched me the most, because it chronicles Albert's life from birth, to his first attempt, to the last moment on earth. It gives hope to the promise of eternal life.

My sister, Bernadette, is very talented as a songwriter and lyricist. Her song, "Beyond the Blue," is so soothing—it helps heal the pain of losing Albert, as does the song, "Rainbows." "In Memory of You" always makes me cry when I sing it, and it takes me on a ride through all the painful emotions again, but it ends on a positive note. The ones that put a smile on my face are the tracks, "Smile," and the title track, "Love + Found." They're upbeat tunes that are fun to sing-along with.

On the day Albert passed away, he carried a prayer book in his backpack that you gave him. What was significant about this prayer book?

On Albert's birthday, my brothers, John and Antonio, and my sister Tess and I went into see a climber. I wanted to give him a meaningful present, so I gave him some of my favorite Catholic prayer books. He said he loved the gift and that he'd take them with him on his trip back to Hawaii the next day.

Through the pages

When I went back to Hawaii for his funeral, the family and I went to the site where Albert took his last breath. It was on a green patch of grass under a tree—it was very peaceful. In Albert's backpack, one of the items was a small prayer booklet I gave him. As I flipped through the pages, I wondered if Albert had prayers to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Just knowing he had it with him when he died gave me comfort.

You and Albert were very close, you even shared a room in college. What were your fondest memories of that time? What songs did you and Albert like listening to?

My fondest memories of living with Albert in college include being a cohost, with him, on our TV show in Hawaii, "90's TV." I interviewed celebrities who were into raves, and he hosted the dance-club segments of the show. We went to events and dance clubs together. He was a great dancer!

Every week, we'd watch the new episodes of our show together. We would laugh at ourselves, and call each other dorks. We always had fun. I especially loved playing softball and basketball with Albert—he was a great athlete, and he was always the life of the party! He made everyone laugh, and he was charmingly obnoxious. Everyone loved him!

Albert and I liked listening to rap and alternative music. One of his favorite songs was Sublime's "Santeria." He had an event-planning business for a while, and one of the events was called "Sugar Daze." Every time I hear Sugar Ray's song, "Someday," I think of Albert, because I have it in mind to sing it together. We loved singing Puff Daddy's song with Faith Evans, "I'll Be Missing You." It's ironic that these lyrics talk about the loss of someone who passed away.

Personality disorder

Just before his death, was he diagnosed with having a bipolar personality disorder? Did you research more about this illness? Do you want to create awareness about this disorder to help inspire those who are afflicted?

The counselor-priest who met with my family before Albert's funeral said that, from what we told him, there was a possibility that my brother had a bipolar disorder, but it was not confirmed.

Albert's Hawaii doctors talked to the family after he died: It was living in California, so I was not in close contact with him. He only came to Hawaii for 12 days before he passed away. The doctors believed that Albert suffered from adjustment disorder, and was experiencing emotional depression.

When asked if Albert had a mental illness, they simply said it was hard to tell, because they had only spent a week's time with him. However, in the days before Albert's death, everything was "rainbows and roses." They only believed that Albert had the will, attitude, ability and the family support to help pull him out of his depressed state.

The family later found out that the doctors diagnosed Albert with a Major Depressive Episode, specifically because of free, near-fatal attempts. Some of his treatment was can be "adjustment disorder" and "situational depression." The specialists also stressed that he was able to conceal the severity of his situation by saying that he was feeling better and optimistic about the future.

I'm doing more research on all these illnesses because I want to understand what Albert was going through, and how it can be prevented. This is now a part of my family history, and I want to be sure it's not perpetuated.

Most touching

The family is essential not to globally suicide. What have been the most touching sentiments expressed by the public ... especially by Tess's people who've also lost loved ones to suicide?

As a family, we absolutely don't condone suicide, but because we have experienced it firsthand, we are compassionate to those who are dealing with it. Since Albert's shocking death, there have been touching comments where people

TO PAGE H10

BARBIZOID-GREY. "A packed with bipolar personality disorder needs to know he's not alone.

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SARAH GERONIMO IS CEBUANA LHUILLIER'S NEWEST GEM

Cebuana Lhuillier recently signed Sarah Geronimo as their first ever celebrity endorser. Sarah and her mother, Cherlyn Geronimo, were present to ink the company's endorsement deal for their celebrity, and the responsible mom noticed displayed by Sarah's mother, a trait that this pre-nuptial customer is can associate with. Photo shows (L-R) Rodolfo Chan-hoh and CEO of Viva Communications Inc., Sarah Geronimo, Jean Henri Lhuillier, President and CEO of Cebuana Lhuillier, Elvira Geronimo, and Andre S. Lhuillier, Vice-President of Cebuana Lhuillier Services Corp.